Transnational Higher Education Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

A qualitative study focussing on the student voice whilst on their TNE journey on a UK franchise programme at a private college in Malaysia

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Abstract

"Culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas." (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2008, 6)

This research explored, in-depth, perceptions, challenges and experiences of transnational education (TNE) students on their educational journey whilst undertaking United Kingdom (UK) franchise programmes in Malaysia. There is a relative lack of recognition in published work relating to the TNE student voice and their experiences at undergraduate level. Globalisation, technological advancements and skills development in knowledge economies continue to dramatically change the landscape of higher education (HE). TNE is an important part of international HE throughout the world offering a range of opportunities for both host and sending institutions as well as their students.

The research also aimed to find out why students value studying on a UK franchised programme and what the host and sending institutions can learn from students in order to deliver a high-quality student experience. It is argued that this research is important, because there is need to know more about the quality of the student TNE journey to ensure that it is appropriate and meets the needs of students as well as other stakeholders, such as employers.

The methodology employed was that of qualitative research using thematic analysis drawing on host student focus groups, and host and sending institutions individual staff interviews. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1996), were important, in particular, in relation to the discussion and awareness of TNE and were used as a theoretical lens in which to view this research.

The overarching theme that emerged from the findings was that of culture and that cultural influences and differences are interconnected in every feature of TNE. A key theme from this research study highlighted how important the Malaysian family is in the lives of students as they experience their HE journeys. Other themes that

emerged from the findings related to learning and teaching, behaviour, and identity. A key finding was that the badge of a Western degree seemed to be the most important thing to many students (and their families) in pursuing their careers and accumulating capital.

A number of recommendations are made from the findings that have emerged from this research and from the research questions in order to help improve the TNE journey of students. The recommendations relate to feedback and student engagement and staff development for those involved in TNE. The recommendations also relate to managers and policy makers from both Malaysia and the UK to help ensure that the management of TNE at host and sending institutions take account of the student voice to ensure that TNE students receive a high-quality student experience.

The research study concludes by suggesting that if the student voice is recognised more and better understood, it could prove invaluable in contributing to the improvement of TNE programmes and the UK home programmes and, therefore, the student experience.

Key Words: Transnational Education (TNE); Culture; Family; Student Voice; Student Experiences; Quality; Globalisation; Malaysia; Franchise.

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"It is not the journey that counts, but who is at your side." (Arikawa, 2017, Inside Flap)

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Abbreviations

ACCA	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
HE	Higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEI	Higher education institution
IAB	The host institution's Industry Advisory Board
IBC	International Branch Campus
ID	Student identity – passwords, usernames, identity badges
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (often used to encompass any sexual orientations or gender identities that do not correspond to heterosexual norms).
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysia Qualifications Framework
MyQUEST	Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges
NSS	National Student Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for HE
SAP	Semester Abroad Programme
TNE	Transnational education
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
VL	Visiting lecturer or part-time lecturer
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Glossary of main terms

Articulation	Recognition by an institution from the offering country for specified programmes to allow partial credit transfer for their award.
Blackboard	The virtual learning environment (VLE) used at the host institution.
Communities of Practice	Based on Wenger (1998; 2006). He proposed three characteristics for Communities of Practice described here through three interrelated dimensions: (1) joint enterprise (domain) through which members demonstrate commitment and competence to work towards a common goal; (2) mutual engagement (community) through which members share activity, information and help; and (3) shared repertoire (practice) through which resources are jointly developed over time (Keay et al., 2014, 257).
Distance education	Programmes are offered virtually at a distance with students enrolled at the sending institution. There may be some face to face support in the host country.
Double or joint degree	Institutions in different countries collaborate to offer a single award - from both institutions - or a double award (from each institution).
Flying faculty	When most or all of the teaching is carried out by the sending institution and teaching staff from the sending institution go to teach for periods of time on the programme in the foreign country.
Franchise	The exact terms of franchise agreements can vary a lot. In the case of this research the sending institution has authorised the host institution to deliver its (sending institution) programme, with no curricular input by the host institution. The qualification is awarded and quality assured by the sending institution. The host

	institution has primary responsibility for delivery of the programme (in this case there is no flying faculty) Recruitment of students and the provision of facilities (library, classrooms, IT) is provided by the host institution. The host institution employs the academic and administrative staff who teach the degree, Importantly, students enrol with the host institution.
Host institution	The Malaysian institution that has franchised the degree programmes from the sending UK university.
Host institution staff	Staff from the Malaysian institution that has franchised the degree programmes from the sending UK university.
International Branch Campus (IBC)	The sending institution establishes a stand-alone satellite operation known as an international branch campus in the host country and is responsible for all aspects of recruiting, admission, programme delivery and awarding of the qualification. In addition to faculty employed from the parent institution, the IBC may employ local and/or international faculty to assist with teaching. Quality assurance of the programme is the responsibility of the sending institution and is often subject to additional accreditation processes by the host country.
Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)	Is responsible for the quality assurance and accreditation of all public and private higher education programmes in Malaysia, including TNE programmes.
Malaysia Qualifications Framework (MQF)	The MQA established, in 2007, a Malaysia Qualifications Framework which regulates TNE in Malaysia within this quality framework.
Moderation	Sampling summative assessments by the sending institution and external examiners to ensure consistency of marking and allocation of grades.

MyQUEST	Is an abbreviation for Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges. The system was developed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia, as an instrument to evaluate the current performance of private colleges in Malaysia in terms of students, programmes, graduates, resources and governance. The ratings are: 6✯ Outstanding; 5✯ Excellent; 4✯ Very Good; 3✯ Good; 2✯ Satisfactory; 1✯ Poor.
National Student Survey (NSS)	An annual survey, commissioned by the Office for Students, and undertaken independently by Ipsos MORI. The survey is completed by final year students at all publicly funded universities and colleges (excluding Scotland).
Neo-colonialism	The forms of dependency among once colonised but now interdependent states (Altbach and Kelly, 1978).
Paradigm	"A belief system or world view that guides the researcher and the research process" (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013, 525).
Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)	Safeguards standards and improves the quality of UK higher education wherever it is delivered around the world and checks that students get the higher education they are entitled to expect.
Reflexivity	"A term used in research methodology to refer to a reflectiveness among social researchers about the implications, for the knowledge that they generate about the social world, of their methods, values, biases, decisions, and mere presence in the very situations they investigate" (Bryman, 2016, 695).
Research journal	A journal, diary or log, etc to help researchers facilitate reflection and their reflective practice.
Saturation	A point at which no new themes are emerging.

Semester Abroad Programme (SAP)	Students have the opportunity to study for a semester at the sending institution (or vice versa for sending institution students).
Sending institution	The UK university that is franchising the degree to another institution.
Sending institution staff	Staff from the UK university that is franchising the degree programmes to the Malaysian institution.
SETARA	SETARA is the third rating exercise undertaken at the institutional level for universities and university colleges in Malaysia. The rating exercise was carried out between March 2013 and July 2013. Data collected and used for the rating was based on the year of 2013. The resulting rating system uses a six-tier categorisation with Tier 6 identified as "Outstanding" and Tier 1 as "Weak".
Study abroad	Students travel for a fixed amount of time to study in another country as part of their home institution award.
Thematic analysis	"A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 79).
Themes	"Ideas, phrases and and/or concepts that identify or define what a statement is about or the core meaning of a response or expression. Themes exist at the interface between the analyst and the data being analysed. Themes are the foundation upon which codes are based" (Guest et al, 2012, 282).
Transnational education (TNE)	TNE is the provision of education for students based in a country other than the one in which the awarding institution is located (BIS, 2014).
Uber-themes	"Meta-themes, conceptually comprised of two or more data-driven themes that correspond to content codes. Meta-themes do not have specific codes associated with them. They are at a higher level of abstraction and

	are not directly observed in the data" (Guest et al, 2012, 282).
3 + 0	A franchise programme where all three years of the degree are taught at the host institution only (and none at the sending institution).
2 + 1	A franchise programme where two years of the degree are taught at the host institution and one year at the sending institution.

Chapter One: Introduction and setting the scene

"One of the most effective ways to learn about oneself is by taking seriously the cultures of others. It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you." (Hall, 1959, 32)

1.1 Introduction

Transnational Higher Education (TNE) student voices are not being fully heard (Caruana and Montgomery, 2015) and their experiences are being neglected (Waters and Leung, 2013). The aim of this research, therefore, is to explore, in-depth, perceptions and experiences of students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking a UK franchise business programme in Malaysia.

TNE is the provision of education from one country delivered in another country, available in a variety of modes and is part of a wider Higher Education (HE) international offering (Doorbar and Bateman, 2008). The United Kingdom (UK) is a major player in the provision of TNE (Mellors-Bourne, 2017) with TNE playing a leading part in educational international expansion (Malik, 2012). It is estimated that there are currently over 700,000 students studying for UK HE qualifications outside of the UK (Universities UK International, 2017). The total TNE activity is estimated to be worth £1.9 billion to the UK economy in 2016, an increase of 73% from 2010 (Department of Education, 2019). Of that, HE TNE was worth £610 million in 2016 to the UK economy, an increase of 72% from 2010 (Department of Education, 2019). It is surprising, therefore, that the HE sector knows relatively little about TNE student experiences. As Hoare (2012, 272) stated about TNE students:

> "We know little about their preferences, even less about the outcomes that they attribute to their TNE experience and nothing in any depth about their longer term career and life trajectories".

Defining TNE is not easy as it covers many different formats (McNamara and Knight, 2014) and operates in different contexts which affect how students experience it (Sin et al., 2019). For the purposes of this research, however, TNE is taken to be the provision of education for students based in a country other than the

one in which the awarding institution is located (BIS, 2014). Healey (2016, 18) referred to the "fundamental principle of transnationality" in describing TNE and being "essentially about the means by which the educational service is provided by the university in country A to students in country B". TNE has many delivery modes, such as franchises and international branch campuses (IBC). TNE can relate to student and academic staff mobility, programme mobility and institutional mobility (UNESCO, 2005; Knight, 2005) and operate in many modes (e.g. full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, distance learning). The focus of this research concerns programme mobility for franchised courses at full-time, undergraduate mode delivered in Malaysia, validated from the UK.

The problem that is being addressed in this research is the lack of published work relating to TNE student experiences (Hoare, 2010), although this is now slowly changing. It is an area worthy of research because very little is known about these students' perceptions and expectations. It is important because there is a need to know more about the quality of the student TNE journey to ensure that it is appropriate and meets the needs of all stakeholders. Garrett (2018,1) stated that:

> "Student evaluations, satisfaction and engagement surveys, external quality assessment and institutional rankings all speak to important outcome dimensions, but none captures the unknown whole. Notions of student happiness or positivity are the latest attempt to illuminate something new".

It is this "unknown whole" of TNE that is important and will be the focus of this research. The research will be based on the students' experience of a UK University (the sending institution) franchised programmes at a private college in Malaysia (the host institution).

This chapter will cover why this research is important and how it will add to new knowledge about the student experiences on their TNE journey. It will briefly outline the research topic and research design (which is then discussed in more detail in chapter 4) and then explain how the research questions have emerged from the relative gaps in the research literature. The researcher's reflexive approach to this research and researcher positionality as well as ethical considerations and issues are briefly mentioned and are considered in greater depth in chapter 4. Finally, there

is an overview of this chapter as well as the outline of the structure of the thesis itself.

1.2 The importance and significance of the research

The landscape of HE has, and continues, to dramatically change because of globalisation, technological advancements and skills development in knowledge economies (Varghese, 2009). As a result of this, competition for Western universities entering into TNE partnerships is fierce and so it is important that universities ensure that they tailor their programmes to suit TNE students' needs as these students have a wide choice of degrees open to them (Heffernan et al., 2010). Indeed, as Hoare (2012, 272) stated, in relation to Australian TNE, "…there are warning signs that, after decades of seemingly unfettered growth, the TNE bubble may be about to burst". The complexities of TNE, the need to maintain academic standards, offer appropriate student learning opportunities and ensure that such provision is cost effective, will be better understood and managed by knowing the views, requirements and motivations of students (Choudada, 2013). Although formal evaluative student feedback often forms part of quality assurance processes, this does not always bring to light more nuanced information on student perspectives of the student journey, such as why they have chosen a Western education and the value they place on it (Wallace and Dunn, 2008a). Indeed, as Milliszewska and Sztendur (2012, 21) concluded:

> "…it is evident that to improve and sustain TNE programmes in the future, it is essential for universities to gain an understanding of the learner' perspective: an understanding that transcends attendance records and academic achievements".

There is limited information from any large-scale surveys in the UK concerning the TNE student experience (e.g. National Student Survey (NSS)) as UK TNE students are not included in these surveys (Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015). There is also a lack of published research on reciprocal learning for sending institutions learning from TNE partners and engagement with the awarding institution (Ziguras and Hoare, 2009). This research will, therefore, address these gaps in TNE knowledge and help to understand better the student voice, which has up until now been, as Pyvis and Chapman (2004, 40) argued, "conspicuously missing from the literature".

A criticism sometimes levelled at franchises is that they can be too Western centric, resulting in a form of cultural imperialism (McNamara and Knight, 2014). This is debateable, however, and as Djerasimovic (2014) argued, there are ways of conceptualising relationships in TNE minimising the need to view TNE as a form of cultural or ideological imperialism. In addition, a Western education experience is, perhaps, often what is sought by TNE students and their families, and the outcomes of this research will, in part, focus, inter alia, on the student perspective of why they have chosen to study on a Western degree and what they hope to gain from it.

A further issue as to why this research is important, is whether students who undertake TNE programmes (as compared to students who travel abroad to gain a Western degree) take part fully in the accumulation of the social and cultural capital that they originally thought they would (Wallace and Dunn, 2008). Waters and Leung (2017, 275) argued that very little thought has been given by sending institutions to, "the geography of knowledge transmission/exchange and (a wider issue) the geographies of institutionalized cultural capital". This research, therefore, will contribute to a greater understanding and clarity as to how students feel about whether the accumulation of social and cultural capital is important when choosing a TNE degree course, along with the possible advantages that Western degrees may bring for the students' future careers (Choudada, 2013). The growth in TNE student numbers has an important impact in how education and learning is viewed and delivered (Montgomery, 2014) and so this research will help improve the student experience, both at the home and at the sending institutions.

Part of the importance of TNE is capacity building to develop the scale and experience required to be able to improve the status and independence of colleges in host countries (Ziguras, 2008). Malik (2012, 1) argued that, "Increasingly TNE will be about extending and building new partnerships and adapting courses to suit the unique demands of prospective TNE students". Hence, there has been major growth in TNE because of the wish of overseas governments to develop knowledge economies (i.e. economies in which information services are dominant as an area of growth), which has created a much more competitive environment (Bohm et al., 2004) and so the students' views and perceptions will be even more important.

There is a high proportion of students studying for UK HE qualifications in other countries and there is a view held by some that TNE programmes can be of low quality (Phan, 2017; Ziguras and Hoare, 2009). Ziguras and Hoare (2009, 3) argued that the, "Lack of transparency and open reflection poses serious reputational risk for TNE provision as a whole". It will, therefore, be important to understand much more than we do at the moment about the student perspective.

1.3 The research topic and research design

This research study is conceptualised within the interpretive paradigm as it aims to explore, in-depth, the perceptions and experiences of host students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking UK franchise programmes in Malaysia. Interpretivist research aims to examine and make sense of the lived experience of the participants in the research (Garrick, 1999). The methodology employed was that of qualitative research using thematic analysis drawing on host student focus groups, and host and sending institutions individual staff interviews. A qualitative approach was chosen for this research in order to listen to and give a voice to TNE students with an open mind (See paragraph 4.3 for a detailed discussion). As Strauss and Corbin (1998, 43) stated about qualitative research:

> "It means hearing what others have to say, say what others do, and representing those as accurately as possible. It means having an understanding, while recognising that researchers' understandings often are based on the values, culture, training, and experiences that they bring to the research situations and that the sense might be quite different from other respondents".

The research has relevance to the researcher's own professional practice as a senior academic in a UK university responsible for academic quality assurance (for home and TNE programmes) and will also be of interest to a wider academic audience in HE, in the UK, and overseas. Given the relative lack of research in this area, particularly qualitative data (Phan, 2017), this study will make a key contribution to original and professional knowledge. Paragraph 1.4 below sets out the gaps in the literature on TNE relating to my research objectives and the extent to which the findings of such studies have a bearing on the research questions. The research questions have, therefore, emerged from these gaps in the literature. Chapter 3 then

discusses in detail the current literature on TNE and where my research is situated within that literature.

1.4 Towards the research questions

Although studies on TNE are now increasing, TNE is still a relatively undeveloped research field (Wilkins, 2016; O'Mahony, 2014). Sin (2013, 849) argued that visibility was needed, "…..to the often neglected 'other' foreign student who seeks Western cultural capital by undertaking foreign tertiary programmes in the home country". However, Kosmutzky and Putty (2016) pointed out that although studies of TNE have increased over recent years they have often concentrated on part-time and/or postgraduate programmes rather than full-time, undergraduate programmes as in my research.

O'Mahony (2014) identified a gap in the literature on the student learning experience of TNE students, and the extent to which the type of education the UK delivers is appropriate in a TNE context. O'Mahony (2014) found that the literature on TNE focussed much less on learning and teaching but more on issues such as quality and regulations, trade and globalisation. Much of the research literature on TNE relates more to the Australian experiences because Australia has been at the forefront of TNE and is the largest provider of TNE (Kosmutzky and Putty, 2016). There is, therefore, a need for more studies to be undertaken beyond the Australian context and on the value TNE students place on their education. Ziguras and Hoare (2009) pointed out that there is limited research on TNE student experiences apart from a few case studies involving small numbers of students, often based on questionnaires and, less frequently on in-depth interviews and focus groups (as in this research). This study will help narrow the gap in the literature, particularly the gap associated with TNE students in Malaysia.

A number of researchers have identified a gap in the literature concerning the voices of the students (Caruana and Montgomery, 2015; Waterval et al., 2015; Wilkins and Balakrishnan, 2013; Miliszewska and Sztendur, 2012; Chapman and Pyvis, 2005). Zain et al. (2013) also suggested that future studies should focus on first year students while Levatino (2015) suggested that further research is required to better understand the students enrolling in TNE and their motivations and aspirations,

which this study will take further. Mellors-Bourne (2017, 13) also argued that, "Despite that increasing prominence [*of TNE*] the existing literature contains little evidence of graduate outcomes or experiences of study for those on TNE programmes".

Some authors, such as Phan (2017), have argued that TNE programmes are of a lower quality and/or prestige than their sending institution's home programmes or in comparison to local programmes and can vary from country to country. Mellors-Bourne (2017, 14) argued that:

> "What appears to emerge is some variation internationally in perceptions of the relative prestige of different types of degree qualifications from different countries, and in particular the perception of TNE degrees in comparison with other local study options".

Collins (2017, 231), in reviewing the work of Phan (2017) and Phan's key claim about mediocrity and TNE, argued that, "If mediocrity, and the wider access to HE it seems to bring, are to be transformative, then we need in-depth understandings of the life paths of students through these spaces….". This is something that this research will help shed light on.

Interestingly, McNamara and Knight (2014) found that the issue of whether TNE programmes and curriculum were too Western-centric and not sensitive to local context and culture, did not rank high in their research. However, they did suggest that this issue does merit further investigation from the open comments they received. This is somewhat at variance, however, to O'Mahony (2014), who found the most challenging aspects of TNE are related to cultural issues which this study will investigate through the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2011) and other theoretical concepts.

The TNE student experience is often not fully taken into account by many sending universities, with franchise students not always getting a comparable experience or support as that in the UK (Debowski, 2008). Waters and Leung (2013, 156) argued that there has been less interest in "non-mobile" students getting an international education and the literature on TNE has concentrated more on regulations and

governance and neglected students taking TNE programmes. Waters and Leung (2013, 156) went on to argue that little is known about who the students are and "why they choose to invest time and money in TNE" and they ask the question "does their education allow them to flourish?".

Dunn and Wallace (2008b) suggested further studies are required into students' needs and issues and more cultural association with their UK universities and greater contact with teachers and other members of the university. Keevers et al. (2014) found that the benefits for students from intercultural engagement is improved if their lecturers are given opportunities to work together and develop a sense of belonging with the sending institution. They recommended further research which aims to develop strong relationships with the TNE team, and how this affects student engagement, learning and achievement.

Keay et al. (2014) focused on developing collaborative relationships arising out of communities of practice which they found could improve the quality of student learning experiences. They discussed the concept of mutual engagement requiring proactive participation from all involved, including students. A key finding from their research was that communications could be improved between and within partners (home and sending institutions) that could help students studying TNE programmes to identify with and feel part of the sending institution. Kosmutzky and Putty (2016, 23) proposed further research to investigate the interwoven process and mechanisms which they called the 'how' of TNE with the agendas, structures and practices, which they called the 'what'. This research will, therefore, look at this through the TNE student journey.

Hoare (2006) discussed the cultural issues within TNE programmes and asserted that the consequences of cultural difference and culture learning are not often considered in TNE programmes. She stated that cultural phenomena can have a significant effect on students' experiences but this is not always appreciated. This research study will therefore be important in understanding the student journey in a cross-cultural context. Hoare (2006, 263) thought that it would be useful if studies of a similar nature were carried out:

> "….so comparisons may enable, for example, more grounded generalisations to be made about the experiences of 'Asian' students, or even 'South East Asian' students, and also about transnational education as a global phenomenon".

Wilkins and Juusola (2018, 76) called for, "future empirical studies on TNE, addressing such issues from the perspectives of governments, students, employers, institution employees (managers, faculty and staff), and the wider communities in both home and host countries".

Waters and Leung (2017) discussed the geography of knowledge transfer through the processes of TNE and concluded that a discussion of how this should happen may benefit students undertaking TNE programmes by giving them a richer and more valuable experience. This research will add to this discussion in order to understand more fully the student journey and the processes that impact on it.

In addition to the above gaps in the research literature that have been identified concerning the lack of the TNE student voice, there are also theoretical concepts that helps allow a better understanding and be a lens with which to view the findings of the research questions below. A key theoretical framework is that of Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1996) which will be used to interpret the findings and place them in the context of previous studies that have been investigated concerning the TNE student voice. The concepts of Bourdieu are important in relation to the discussion and understanding of TNE and will help to better understand an individual's behaviour and performance.

In summary, the research problem that has been identified by this research is the relative lack of recognition in the research literature on TNE relating to the student voice and their experiences at undergraduate level (Dunn and Wallace, 2008). If the TNE student voice was better understood it could prove invaluable in contributing to the improvement of the student experience on TNE programmes as well as improvements to the UK franchise programmes and home student experiences. It is unlikely that in any other global business there would be this limited knowledge of a key stakeholder, not being fully aware of their views, perceptions and expectations (Hoare, 2012). As Kell and Vogl (2010, ix) argued, "Relatively few writers have so

far explored and analysed the dilemmas, issues and problems faced by students themselves". Andrews and Tynan (2010) acknowledged that there is a small but growing literature on TNE and in arguing why the student voice is important stated that it can provide a rich picture of the student's perspective of their experience and capture students' feelings as well as information about their experiences to better improve their HE journey. As Phan (2017, 7) argued, "…the hunger and thirst for more knowledge about TNE has never been more intense than it is now".

The outcomes of this research will, therefore, help improve the understanding of the views and perceptions of students on their TNE journey. The three research questions below have emerged from, and have been shaped by, the gaps in the research literature, outlined above, relating to the student voice and experiences whilst on their TNE journey and are addressed in this thesis which will enable this study to make an original contribution to professional knowledge:

1. What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?
2. Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?
3. What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience

The first research question seeks to understand, in detail, the student TNE journey and what students see as positive and negative aspects of that journey, particularly their day to day experiences whilst studying. The second research question then seeks to find out what value, if any, they place on their time studying on a TNE programme, and what reasons they give. The third research question aims at finding out what both institutions can learn from listening to the students in order to ensure that students receive a high-quality experience.

1.5 The research setting

The host institution in Malaysia, partnered with my own university in the UK were chosen to explore the student voice in this research for a number of important reasons. My professional work is as a senior manager at the UK university and

working with this Malaysian partner had raised a number of burning questions in my mind concerning the TNE student experience and how culture may impact on students and staff. This motivated me to try to answer some of these important questions to commence a professional doctorate in order to enhance my own professional practice, to influence the practice of others and ultimately to better understand, and thus importantly improve, the TNE student experience at the Malaysian private college.

The Malaysian private college is a well established, well respected and leading educational institution in Malaysia and major partner with my own university. It forms a key part of the international strategy of my own university with approximately 3000 students studying on the sending institution franchise programmes at the private college. Choosing a Malaysian college as part of this research was important because of the significance of Malaysia to the UK and TNE generally as it is a major educational player in South East Asia, a Regional Hub for HE, and with over 70,000 TNE students studying on UK degrees in the country. Malaysia is the largest market for UK TNE with more than four times as many Malaysian TNE students than those studying in the UK itself (QAA, 2010). Franchises are a major part of TNE activity and as Healey (2013a, 108) noted, "Franchising degrees to overseas providers, normally for-profit private companies, has developed into a major activity for English universities". Malaysia, therefore, offers a rich research setting in which to explore important questions relating to the student voice and their HE journey on a franchised degree whilst studying in Malaysia.

This research would, therefore, be in my own professional work sphere at the home and sending institutions I already worked with and know well. Access to participants as part of the research was presumed to be less difficult for me to achieve but there were also challenges with my positionality as an insider/outsider and these needed to be mitigated against as far as possible. These challenges are discussed in detail later in Paragraph 4.11.

For the above reasons, the choice of a Malaysian private college linked to my own UK university, validating franchise degrees, is a valuable and interesting case study

to explore TNE student experiences and expectations. Although the research does not set out to generalise the subsequent findings, it is possible to claim a broader relevance from the findings of this case study which will help contribute to the greater understanding of the TNE student voice.

1.6 My reflexive approach to this research, my researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues

The research was conducted within my own professional work sphere between his own university and a partner college in Malaysia. I am a senior manager at a UK university and as part of his work, I regularly visit and work with the partner college, particularly from an academic quality perspective.

I adopted a reflexive approach by keeping a research journal to analyse the effect on myself during the research process. As Garrick (1999, 155) asserted, "Self-understanding (in so far as this is possible) lies at the heart …of qualitative education research". I also needed to consider and acknowledge the possible conflict of being an insider and/or outsider in this research and the possible difficulties of sometimes being on the border between the two (Arber, 2006).

Ethical issues were considered, including any cross-cultural challenges. Formal ethics approval to carry out this research was granted from the University of Lincoln on 7th September 2016 from the School of Education Research Committee (See Appendix 1).

My reflexive approach to this research, my researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues are considered in detail in chapter 4.

1.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has reflected on why the research on the TNE student voice and the student TNE journey is important and how this research study will add to new knowledge, at doctoral level, about the student experiences and their perceptions. It has also outlined the research topic and research design and explained how the research questions have been shaped by the relative gaps in the research literature. A justification and explanation of why the research setting was chosen are set out.

The researcher's reflexive approach to this research, researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues were briefly discussed but will be fully considered in chapter 4.

1.8 Overview and structure of the thesis

The aim of this research was to find out more about the students' experiences on their TNE journey on a UK franchised programme in Malaysia. The first-person pronoun has been used in parts of this study to show the importance of the research and promote an interesting narrative. The thesis is presented in seven interconnected chapters. The content of each of the remaining chapters is briefly summarised below:

Chapter Two: TNE in context covers the meaning of TNE as well as the scope, importance and value of TNE. The importance of TNE to Malaysia is discussed as well as an outline of the background to the host institution and the link with the sending institution. Finally, there is a brief discussion on what a high-quality student experience should be.

Chapter Three: Literature review covers the effects of globalisation as a context for TNE and its growth and importance over recent years and into the future. Bourdieu's theoretical concept of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1996) is used as theoretical lens with which to view this research along with other cultural frameworks. Other relevant key writers on cross-cultural theories and concepts are reviewed. In addition, other concepts are discussed relating to TNE including learning and teaching in a TNE context, the importance of understanding the culture of silence, as well as what is currently known about the student perspective of their TNE journey. The possible Westernisation and neo-colonisation of TNE are discussed, and in conclusion, how the reputation, image and branding of institutions relates to TNE students and their families are considered.

Chapter Four: Methodology covers the importance and relevance of educational research and the philosophical approach to this research. The design and data collection methods chosen to answer the research questions including the reasons behind not using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS)

programme are discussed. The pilot study is reviewed as well as the choice of research instruments for the main research phase of the study and how the data was collected and transcribed. The choice and approach of thematic analysis, based largely on Braun and Clark (2006), is considered in detail. The chapter also describes the study population and the demographic information of the students who took part in the focus groups and the roles of the staff who were chosen for the individual interviews. Possible impediments to the research and how they were overcome are set out in tabular format before discussing research quality, setting out how validity was ensured for this research study. Finally, the researcher's reflexive approach to this research, his researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues are considered.

Chapter Five: Presentation of the findings are outlined with the overarching theme of culture and the other four key themes and their sub-themes. Each theme that has emerged from the data is presented in detail with relevant supporting quotes telling the interesting story from the students (and staff) perspective. Finally, the findings are summarised.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the findings examines and discusses the findings of each theme and the overarching theme of culture. The findings are discussed, in particular, in relation to Bourdieu's (1996) theoretical concept of capital, habitus and field. This discussion is then directly related to answering the three research questions.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion sets out the limitations to this research study. It suggests further study that would be worthwhile in continuing the focus on the experiences and views of TNE students and other key stakeholders in TNE. The contribution to original and professional knowledge is stressed and a brief summary of the findings outlined. Recommendations are suggested that have emerged from the answering of the research questions in order to improve professional practice and advise policy makers in relation to TNE. The final part of this chapter ends with concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Transnational education in context

"In spite of the fact that TNE is increasing in scope and scale there is a significant lack of reliable information regarding the nature and extent of TNE provision…." (Knight and McNamara, 2017, 1)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will cover the meaning of TNE as well as the scope, importance and value of TNE. Malaysia and TNE will be discussed as well as an outline of the background to the host institution and the link with the sending institution. Finally, there is a brief discussion on what a high-quality student experience should be. A brief overview will conclude the chapter.

2.2 What is TNE?

Geographic borders are now more open (Bjarnason and Davies, 2013) and are less important in the world of education (Knight, 2005). Altbach et al. (2010, 34) asserted that, "The movement of people across borders is one of the oldest and most obvious manifestations of internationalisation". This movement of people has now expanded, as far as TNE is concerned, to the movement of ideas and skills, student and academic staff mobility, programme mobility and institutional mobility. TNE can take a number of different forms including branch campuses, franchising or partnerships, articulation or twinning, distance or virtual learning, study abroad or double or joint degrees (Alam et al. 2013).

TNE is an important part of international HE throughout the world offering a range of opportunities for both host and sending institutions as well as their students (Keay et al., 2014) although knowledge about TNE is still relatively limited after over twenty-five years of major TNE activity (McNamara and Knight, 2014). Coverdale-Jones (2013, 1) stated, "TNE varies with history, geography, politics and the culture of a national system of HE", and the movement of HE across national borders is not a new occurrence (Sakamoto and Chapman, 2011). TNE has a history going back many centuries and as Montgomery (2016, 17) asserted, "International partnerships develop in historical, geographic, social, and cultural contexts".

Pietsch (2010 and 2013) discussed the concept of the 'wandering scholar' referring to the movement of students and teachers throughout medieval Europe. Knight (2005) also noted that the mobility of students, lecturers, knowledge and values was evident for centuries, but it is only in recent times that the mobility of programmes has seen a significant growth through TNE. Ziguras (2008) argued that TNE was seen by some as colonial powers implanting homogeneous global cultural forms of education across the developing world, to support their economic and political interests which threaten national cultures and languages. Ziguras (2008) stated, however, that this is now a rather outdated critique and that contemporary critics of cultural imperialism in international education are less concerned with the actions of individual governments and more concerned with the growth of global markets. Hoare (2012, 271) also stressed that "TNE can be interpreted as everything from altruistic to neo-colonial overtones" but what seems certain is that TNE has now become unstoppable (He and Liu, 2018).

There are numerous names and definitions for TNE including cross-border higher education and onshore/offshore higher education as well as many definitions of TNE along with their various delivery modes. Waters and Leung (2017, 282) argued that, "In its idealized form, TNE indicates knowledge transported from one country to another, from one institutional environment to another, and from one cultural and social context to another", although TNE in practice is not so clear, being affected by economic, financial, social and cultural forces. According to the British Council (2013), host countries, apart from China, have not proposed definitions of TNE and this may say something about the Western centric approach to TNE. Caruana and Montgomery (2015, 1) also noted that Caruana and Spurling (2007) in their review suggested that, "……a key problem in understanding TNE is terminology, since a variety of terms are often used inconsistently to describe a complex range of activities".

Knight (2005) noted how the vocabulary of international education and TNE has evolved over the last forty years but particularly in the last few years with new terms and definitions being introduced. Mellors-Bourne (2017) argued that TNE terminology is not consistently used throughout the world, including the UK, which limits the use of published data about the provision of TNE. Heffernan et al. (2010)

argued that researching TNE can be problematic because of the confusion in the terminology used which relates back to the evolution of the vocabulary discussed by Knight (2005). Hill et al. (2014) also found that there is no common understanding of what TNE means and argued that because of this, and due to managers and academics being unsure of how it should function, it is not surprising that TNE students do not know how such programmes should operate either. Knight (2016) has put forward a common TNE framework, which she argued will have many benefits. If accepted, this common TNE framework will then aid clarity and give a common understanding to both host and sending countries (Knight, 2016).

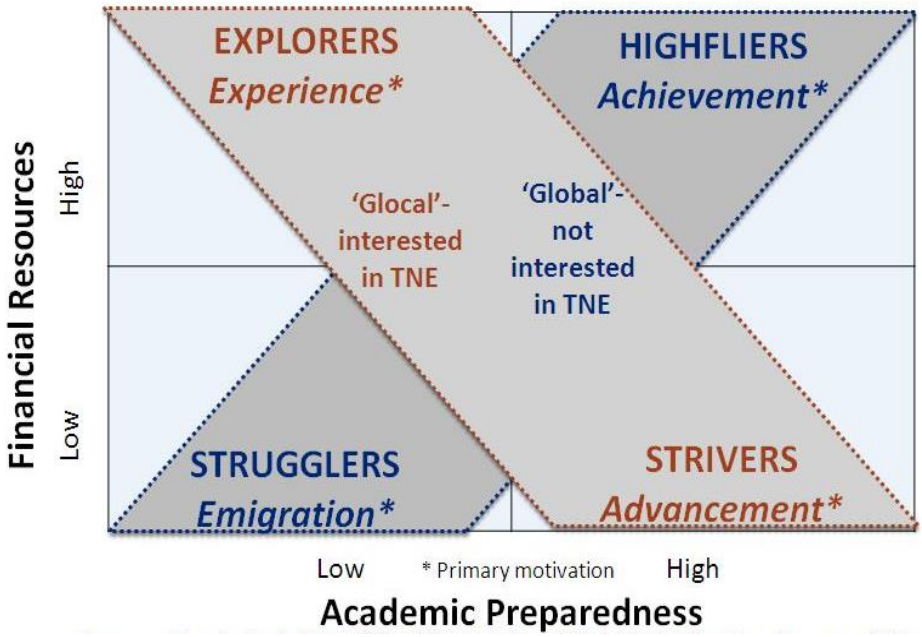
Research undertaken by Doorbar and Bateman (2008) and McNamara and Knight (2014) noted a high percentage of students, staff and employers did not know about TNE and the opportunities and experiences it presented in their country. Pyvis and Chapman (2005) found that no one used the term and also noted that students and other stakeholders were not familiar with the phrase TNE. Hill et al. (2014) found that students, parents and teachers understood the importance of an international education and this may be through TNE programmes. However, Hill et al. (2014, 957) argued that, "they had little to no understanding as to what is meant by TNE, what it entails, how it is managed or indeed how to recognise it beyond the association with a foreign name and foreign lecturers". It might be that this is not such a problem. It could be that what it is called is far less important to students and other stakeholders when compared to what they are actually undertaking, and this current research should shed light on this. More work with host students and academic staff is needed to explore their views and better understand the true nature of TNE, and this study seeks to narrow the gap in the literature by exploring in detail the TNE journey of students in Malaysia.

Students who aspire to study abroad to gain a foreign degree, along with the likely advantages that such a degree will bring for their careers but cannot afford to so study in their home country (or within the region), are often called 'glocal' students (Caruana and Montgomery, 2015; Choudada, 2013). This is in contrast to those students who do study abroad who are often called 'global' students. Drori et al (2014) discussed the notion of 'glocalisation' and asserted that it means much more than what the word literally says. Drori et al (2014, 97) argued that it is also about

the interaction between global and local and argued that 'glocalisation' is "inherently a catchphrase for complexity and multidimensionality". This growth in 'glocal' students has had, therefore, a crucial impact on how education and learning is viewed and delivered (Montgomery, 2014). As Montgomery (2014, 198) asserted, "The growth in so-called 'glocal' students represents fundamental changes in the way disciplinary knowledge is communicated and constructed". In addition, as part of their education, TNE students often want to be taught (at least in part) by Western academics which can have neo-colonial overtones (Phan, 2017).

Choudada (2013) looked at the primary motivations of students in terms of their financial resources and academic preparedness (shown in Fig 2.1). 'Glocal' students interested in TNE were classified as 'Explorers' or 'Strivers', depending on their primary motivation and financial circumstances.

Fig 2.1 Primary motivations of students in terms of their financial resources and academic preparedness



Source: Choudada (2013) Know your international student: Global or glocal?

2.3 The Scope, importance and value of TNE

The importance of TNE should not be underestimated and is a worldwide phenomenon whose scale of activity has grown exponentially in recent years (Sin et al., 2019; Lane and Kinser, 2014; Naidoo, 2009). Naidoo (2009) attempted to

estimate the scale of the global market but found it difficult due to the lack of available and inconsistent data in many countries. McNamara and Knight (2015) found that very few host countries have the ability, or wish, to collect TNE student enrolments data in their country and this raises important challenges going forward. Caruana and Montgomery (2015, 2) also observed that, "It is difficult to estimate the scale of the global market for TNE since many countries do not record the overseas activities of their universities".

TNE is becoming increasingly competitive in a complex worldwide landscape. Whereas the UK was once globally dominant, the UK's market share of international students studying in the UK is falling so that the UK is now behind the USA and Australia (IFF Research, 2018). This, therefore, places even more importance on TNE as part of what the UK offers in its HE portfolio.

From a UK perspective, TNE is important both to the HE system and the UK economy, with an increasing upwards trend in TNE activity (QAA, 2017a). A large majority of UK universities (84%) now deliver TNE to over 700,000 students worldwide in over 200 countries with this number having increased year on year (UUKI, 2018) with an 81% increase from 2008/2009 when there were 388,135 students (UUK, 2017; QAA 2017a). This TNE activity has involved distance learning, partnership working or branch campuses (QAA, 2017a). The UK higher education sector now provides qualifications to more students overseas than to international students attending in the UK (UUKI, 2018). The UK HE TNE subject delivered in most countries is Business and Management (UK HE international Unit, 2016). Table 2.1 below, shows the breakdown of the number of TNE students in 2016/2017 in terms of types of collaboration and between undergraduate and postgraduate. It should be noted, however, that TNE students should not be regarded as a homogenous group but vary, for instance, in age, gender, nationality, culture and mode of study (Djerasimovic, 2014; Wallace and Dunn, 2008).

At the same time, over the last 5 years, there was an 8.8% decline of all students studying on HE programmes in the UK (2,280,830 students in 2015/2016) (QAA, 2017a). This compares to a 2% increase of international students studying in the UK on HE programmes in 2015/2016 (438,015) as well as a 39% increase of TNE

students over the same five year period (QAA, 2017a). The number of visas issued to students by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) dropped by 30 per cent from June 2011 to June 2012 which has increased the worldwide trend of prospective students considering TNE programmes (Malik, 2012).

Table 2.1 Number of TNE students studying for UK HE qualification outside of the UK 2016/2017

Type of collaboration	All programmes
	707,915 students 82% undergraduate 18% postgraduate
Overseas partner institution	58%
Collaborative Provision (including Franchises)	21%
Distance, Flexible and Distributed Learning	17%
Overseas Campus	4%
Other	1%

Source: UUKI (2018)

The value of HE TNE activity for 2016/2017 was estimated to be worth £610 million to the UK economy, up 72% from 2010 (Department for Education, 2019; UUKI, 2018). In addition, 34% (16,500 entrants) of all international undergraduate degree entrants in England transferred in 2012/2013 from programmes delivered outside England, making TNE important for recruitment for sending institutions (HEFCE, 2014). This 'Halo-effect' is worth over £40 million annually to the UK (BIS, 2014). However, accurate and trustworthy data for TNE is generally not available and what there is, is often relatively poor (Lane and Kinser, 2014; O'Mahony, 2014). Healey (2013) explained that it was only recently that the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) began examining the quality of TNE and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) started collecting data. Indeed, Healey (2013a, 198) described the franchising of university degrees as a somewhat "shadowy business" although in theory students should have an equitable experience on franchise programmes as compared to the students on the sending programme (HEA and NUS, 2014). Such parity in experience is, however, not without challenge for both the host and sending institutions. As Jenkins (2015, 1) stated:

> "Obviously, the students are on a branch campus or studying at a partner institution, and you're hoping that their entire experience is a UK experience, which of course isn't possible. The knowledge they gain, however, will be in part provided by the UK university".

Healey (2013a) challenged the views that the motivations of sending institutions for TNE are mostly commercial and corporate in nature. He found that franchises were often started for a mix of non-commercial reasons and that they aligned with personal agendas of staff relatively low down in universities, rather than meeting strategic objectives of the institution. Doorbar and Bateman (2008) on the other hand found the main motivation for UK universities undertaking TNE was an internationalisation agenda. TNE is an increasingly important and integral part of internationalisation on the HE agenda (Huang, 2007). Internationalisation has played a key role in shaping the worldwide HE landscape and as a result HE has become more mobile (HEFCE, 2014). Internationalisation is changing the world of HE, and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation (Knight, 2008). However, globalisation is not a neutral concept and may be interpreted negatively in South East-Asia which may link back to a 'Westernisation' approach (Coverdale-Jones, 2013). Knight and de Wit (1995, 13) discussed the aims of internationalisation including economic, cultural and social reasons. They said that individual development for students through "confrontation with other cultures" is very important. However, even after a number of years of international cross-cultural interaction amongst students the commitment to internationalisation rests on relatively fragile foundations (Montgomery, 2009). Gu (2009, 627) reinforced this view and argued "the power of the market is the dominant force that will determine the future of TNE and has become dominated by market principles". The views of students are, and will, therefore, become even more important and my research will consider the students' perspectives in greater detail.

Heffernan et al. (2010) and Eldridge and Cranston (2009) both saw their research on TNE through the lens of tighter and diminishing government funding for HE and the need to look for alternative funding methods. Heffernan et al. (2010, 30) argued that the, "growth phase for TNE is over and it is now entering a mature stage of the lifecycle, where competition is more intense". It is this increase in competition and the wider choices that host institutions have that may drive the changes for more

sensitive cross cultural approaches and where the student voice will become very important.

2.4 TNE and Malaysia

The Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963, with peninsular Malaya (independent since 1957), Sarawak and Sabah (both on Borneo) along with Singapore, which subsequently left the Federation in 1965 (Brown, 2007). Malaysia is one of the most religiously and culturally diverse countries in Southeast Asia (Brown, 2007) with about 29 million people, consisting of 59% Malays and other indigenous groups, 32% Chinese, and 9% Indians/others with each ethnic group strongly adhering to its religious and cultural beliefs (Kassim, 2014: Ng, 1998). Sin (2009, 286) stated that, "Malaysian society features a mosaic of racial and ethnic groups with different cultures, religions, languages and educational backgrounds intersecting class divisions". The English language is widely spoken in Malaysia, but the official language is Malay, although many Malaysians are used to speaking a number of languages in the educational system.

The host college in this research is in Malaysia. Malaysia is an important country concerning TNE and as Hill et al. (2014, 953) stated, "For historical reasons, the Malaysia-UK relationship has been the longest among all Malaysia's education relationships with foreign countries". According to Singh et al. (2014) and Knight and Morshadi (2011), Malaysia wants to become a high income economy through knowledge and innovation and is aiming to be a leading country in the global international student market and the hub in the region. Jianxian (2009) stated that, "Malaysia wishes to meet a rising domestic demand for HE and improve the capacity and performance of the whole HE system, especially among private colleges". Malaysia's strategic education blueprint 2015-2025 is aimed to position it as one of the key higher education hubs in the world because of the importance of education to social and economic development with a key emphasis on entrepreneurship education. The internationalising policy for HE in Malaysia has a number of initiatives including transforming the country into an education hub, strengthening Malaysia's capacity for human capital and knowledge-based economy and increasing internationalisation for teaching, learning, research and development (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). Azman et al. (2014,

317) stated that, “Malaysia is responding to the demand and pressures arising from the fast-changing global landscape”. The choice of Malaysia for this research is, therefore, important and will add to the knowledge about TNE.

There are approximately 750,000 students enrolled in HE in Malaysia (QAA, 2010). Malaysia has now moved from a sending to a receiving country. HE institutions are now going through rapid changes with many having grown in size with students from various ethnicities, races and nationalities, home and overseas (Deni et al., 2014). The international student market has become very important to Malaysia, doubling over the past five years and so Malaysia has become a global leader in terms of the domestic international provision in the country (British Council, 2018) with many students coming from North African countries (Jenkins, 2015) as well as from East, South and West Asia, the Middle East and the Eastern European block (Slethaug and Manjula, 2013). Singh et al. (2014) found that the ‘pull’ of social and cultural factors of Malaysia for international students was more important than the choice of the HE Institution. For example, the national reputation, a safe environment, shared cultural values and familiarity and diversity in Malaysia.

Malaysia is the top country in terms of UK TNE student numbers with over 72,000 students studying for a UK qualification amounting to 10.4% of all UK HE TNE students globally (UUKI, 2017). Malaysia has been keen in adopting TNE to improve its workforce. Many Malaysian students went abroad for their HE up to the late 1990s mainly because the HE system in Malaysia was relatively undeveloped and because of the racial quota system which meant Chinese Malaysians had restricted availability of studying in Malaysia (Healey, 2017a). However, this changed after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 when the Malaysian currency collapsed (Healey, 2017b).

In recent years, as discussed above, Malaysia has been aiming to become a leading country in the global international student market and the education hub in the region (Healey, 2017b). As part of this expansion, the Private Higher Education Act, 1996 was passed to assist in the provision of private HE in Malaysia (Morshidi et al., 2011) which, in part, was also a result of the imposition of ethnic quotas in

Malaysia's public HEIs (Welch, 2011). The Chinese and Indian ethnic groups were often forced in to the private sector in order to obtain a higher education experience (Welch, 2011). The private HE sector, therefore, rapidly expanded at the end of the twentieth century because of the liberalisation of the private sector (Sidhu and Christie, 2015) and host private colleges, mostly without their own degree awarding powers, sought partnerships with overseas universities to offer foreign degree programmes (Morshidi et al., 2011). Many of these partnerships often involved '2+1' arrangements, with the first two years of study undertaken in Malaysia and the final year in the foreign partner country. However, over time, '3+0' arrangements have become more popular, with all study taking place in Malaysia to stop the market in TNE reducing (Healey, 2017b; McNamara and Knight, 2015). Double and joint degrees also became popular as well as more recently, international branch campuses (IBC). There are now six IBCs with 16,259 students in 2013–14 (McNamara and Knight, 2015). For the period 2015/2017 there were 20 public higher education institutions (HEIs) and 599 private HEIs in Malaysia (British Council, 2018). HE is therefore vital for the future of Malaysia (Azman et al. (2014, 302) and Malaysia is, "beginning to appear on the global HE radar".

From a UK perspective, Malaysia is the second largest country of origin of students, after China, for TNE progression to England (63% of total entrants [3200] to English first degree programmes from Malaysia use the TNE entry route) (HEFCE, 2014). However, the recent reduction in government scholarships from Malaysia and other economic changes, including the Asian financial crisis in 1997 (Healey, 2017b), has meant that for many Malaysians this is not now possible (Doorbar and Bateman, 2008) and they will stay in Malaysia for their HE.

Caruana and Montgomery (2015, 11) asserted that, "In Malaysia there has been a proliferation of 'degree mills' and TNE has been difficult to regulate". Morshidi (2006) also discussed this concern of the regulation of TNE in Malaysia. However, this challenge of lack of regulation is now changing with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), established in 2007, responsible for the quality assurance and accreditation of all public and private higher education programmes in Malaysia. This includes TNE programmes in Malaysia and the MQA collects the relevant data via biannual audits of universities and colleges (McNamara and

Knight, 2015). The MQA established a Malaysia Qualifications Framework (MQF) which regulates TNE in Malaysia within this quality framework. Education is, therefore, one of the most regulated areas in Malaysia with the country having controls on the types of HEIs that may operate in Malaysia as well as how they may operate (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2001).

Malaysia is an important country for TNE partnerships and so my study, through a better understanding of the student journey and the value they place on that journey, will help drive improvements of the student experience and thus the enhancement of TNE partnerships generally.

2.5 Background to the host institution and the link with the sending institution

The private college in Malaysia that is the subject of this research is a private education institution in Malaysia and offers a range of bachelor's and master's degrees through partner arrangements with a range of western HEIs. It has been a partner of the sending institution for more than 20 years. In 1986 the College was founded as a small private college in Kuala Lumpur and in 1991, established a campus in Subang Jaya followed by a branch campus at Kota Kinabalu, Sabah in 1996. A further college was established in Putra Nilai in 1998 and the owners also acquired a College in Penang in 2000. The collaboration with the sending institution began in the 1990s with twinning and franchise arrangements, which were subsequently supplemented by dual award arrangements at the International University in Malaysia (the host university, though, was not part of this research). There are now nearly 3000 students across all the sending institution's franchised programmes at the host institution. More recently, an additional programme from the sending university, in mass communications, was added to the portfolio of programmes instead of only business programmes. The numbers are still relatively low, and these students were not included in this research.

As well as the franchised programme curriculum, students are required to take additional modules in Islamic studies and moral education. This is because of government requirements placed on private providers to prepare students to live in a multi-cultural country such as Malaysia with suitable moral and ethical values (Morshidi, 2006).

The collaboration at the private college and the university fall mostly within the

quality assurance responsibilities of the UK university business school. The school currently runs the programmes as franchises with all the teaching carried out by the host institution (so not, for example, on the basis as a flying faculty system – see Glossary). Programmes are managed at the sending institution's business school by an associate dean of school, supported by two sending institution link tutors, whose role it is to support, visit, and liaise with the partner. At module level, each module is managed by a module leader at the host institution who is supported by their head of programme and UK link tutors.

The host institution manages the admissions process for standard applicants who meet the entry requirements as detailed in the approved programme specification(s). Students may come from the host institution's foundation programme (with progression to year one of an honours degree) or diploma programme (with progression to year two of the honours programme). Students also come with other qualifications from Malaysia or other countries, mainly in south east Asia.

The host institution has its own managed learning environment, a blackboard portal, but students are also provided with a username and password for general access to their sending institution's VLE account. The host institution staff have open access to the sending institution's module learning and teaching materials via the VLE.

The host institution runs three semesters starting in January, May and August each year. For the largest campus in Subang Jaya, the college business school is located on a sending institution branded floor.

A Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) exists which is a reciprocal arrangement that affords students the opportunity to study in the partner institution for one or two semesters at no additional cost. Students are only required to pay the 'normal' tuition fee to their home institution. Host institution students may also opt to study their final year at the sending institution in the UK. There are also field study visits arranged for the host institution students to visit the UK and the sending institution.

Lecturers are recruited locally by the host institution in line with the MQA qualification requirements. The host institution normally only recruit staff with PhD qualifications to full time academic positions. Staff CVs are approved by the sending institution during the (re) validation process and in the interim, by the link

tutors.

Programme committees meet twice in an academic year. They include student representation and the link tutors may attend in an ex-officio capacity. In addition to the student feedback obtained via programme committees, link tutors meet with students during their visits. Student feedback on the lecturers and the sessions they deliver is collected at the end of each semester via an online questionnaire by the host institution through their own system.

The sending institution is a medium/large-size university which employs over 2,400 staff and has around 27,000 registered students (21,000 undergraduate and 6,000 postgraduate students, including both home and collaborative provision). The majority of the UK university's students are based at its home campuses in the south east of England. However, around 6,700 students are registered on programmes which are delivered, assessed and/or supported through collaborative partnerships, 3,000 in the UK and 3,700 overseas.

The sending university's vision, which is an integral part of its 2015-2020 strategic plan, is to be internationally renowned as the UK's leading business-facing university and wished to enhance its global reputation with students, institutions, organisations and government agencies by, amongst other objectives, developing international partnerships. The private college and the sending institution became partners because of the host institution's:

i) size, reputation and track record;
ii) the market demand, viability and potential growth;
iii) positive engagement with sending institution's staff;
iv) the Malaysian education system; and
v) teaching in the English language.

There is a close synergy between the respective institution's aims and objectives and this was developed initially, at the start of the partnership, by a bottom up process with like-minded lecturers in the UK and Malaysia. Initially, this was with a recognition agreement, then a top-up arrangement, to quite soon, a full franchise arrangement as of today. The development of this partnership accords with the

views of Healey and Michael (2015, 377) who stated that, “while initial aims of partnerships may drive the form of partnership at the outset of the relationship, few partnerships remain unchained over their lifetime.”.

As Healey (2013a, 191) asserted, most participants in his research on why universities English franchised their programmes to overseas providers, “stressed the importance of close personal relationships between the champions of the franchises and the private entrepreneurs who owned the private colleges”. This was the case for this partnership as well. However, it soon became clear to the management of both institutions that this was a partnership worth developing and it became a key part of the international strategic plans of both institutions early on in the process.

2.6 What would a high-quality student experience look like?

In this study, the third research question relates to ‘what can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience?’. It is, therefore, important to briefly discuss what a high-quality student experience may involve. The QAA (2018a, 15) defines a high-quality student experience as “quality which can consistently lead to credible and recognised positive outcomes for students. High-quality is the minimum level of quality that is expected of all providers of UK HE”. The QAA (2018b, 3) outlines the revised UK Quality Code, and in terms of expectations of quality states that:

> “Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed. From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education”.

The revised quality code has core practices to demonstrate the expectations for quality. For example, the QAA (2018b, 3) stated:

> “Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them”.

For the purposes of this research, therefore, the QAA definition above for a high-quality student experience will be used.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has discussed the meaning of TNE as well as some of the challenges of defining it due to the lack of, and inconsistent use of data, worldwide. The scope, importance and value of TNE was also discussed as well as TNE and Malaysia. The background to the host institution and the link with the sending institution was outlined and finally, a discussion of what a high-quality student experience should be.

In the next chapter, the effects of globalisation are discussed. Bourdieu's (1996) theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field are examined as a theoretical lens in which to view the findings of the research. A review of other relevant key writers on cross-cultural theories and concepts are also discussed. In addition, learning and teaching in a TNE context, the importance of understanding the culture of silence, and the student perspective of their TNE journey are considered. The possible Westernisation and neo-colonisation of TNE, and how the reputation, image and branding of institutions relates to TNE students and their families are then analysed.

Chapter Three: Literature review

"Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow. Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human." (Yousafzai, 2013, 136)

3.1 Introduction

Cultural influences and differences are interconnected in every feature of TNE (He and Liu, 2018). Kell and Vogl (2010, 5) argued that, "….TNE is a complex and discursive process where clashes of expectations and cultural misunderstandings often typify the experience (*of TNE students*)". This research, therefore, explores this possible cultural impact through the perceptions and experiences of students on a UK TNE franchise programme in Malaysia.

This chapter starts with a summary of the effects of globalisation as a context for TNE and its growth and importance over recent years and into the future. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1996), is discussed and will be used as a theoretical lens through which to view this research along with other cultural frameworks.

The chapter also provides a selected review of other relevant key writers on cross-cultural theories and concepts including the role of the family in Malaysia. In addition, other concepts will be discussed relating to TNE, including learning and teaching in a TNE context, the importance of understanding the culture of silence as well as what is currently known about the student perspective of their TNE journey. The possible westernisation and neo-colonisation of TNE will be discussed, and finally, how the reputation, image and branding of institutions relates to TNE students and their families.

3.2 Globalisation and TNE

Globalisation is a relatively old process dating back more than five centuries to the start of western colonisation. The concept of globalisation of HE in Asia is not new

either, with many countries in that region sending students and staff abroad, from the late nineteenth century onwards, in order to establish an HE system in their own country (Huang, 2007). However, globalisation processes have speeded up over recent years and as Escriva-Beltran et al. (2018, 1) asserted, "Globalisation is one of the most powerful worldwide business drivers…". This is as a result of the world economy becoming much more integrated because of new information and communications technologies, the increased movement of people and goods, the rise of the use of the English language and the increasing activities of multi-national companies across boundaries (Altbach et al., 2009; Ellwood, 2006).

Liu (2017, 65) argued that, "Globalisation is most often understood in strictly economic terms….". However, globalisation, according to Altbach and Knight (2007), is concerned not only with economic forces but also political and societal forces and influences. It could be argued that the term 'globalisation' is not helpful in describing what it attempts to represent and as Tomlinson (2007,148) stated, "the processes it describes are often not actually global because it can seem to many people to articulate, and even to distribute and enforce, the dominant cultural, economic and political discourses of the West". However, Tomlinson (2007) also stated that it is wrong to confuse cultural globalisation with cultural imperialism. Callinicos (2007, 70) defined imperialism as "when two forms of competition, the economic struggle among capitals and geopolitical rivalries between states, fuse", whereas he defined globalisation as "an economic process, increasing cross-border integration of production and markets" (64). Globalisation, however, in its broadest form, according to Liu (2017, 65), "spans separate, overlapping domains, it is fundamentally an economic process of integration that transcends national borders and ultimately affects the flow of knowledge, people, and ideas".

Globalisation has substantially increased the mobility of people and culture within and across country borders. Altbach et al. (2010, 30) asserted that, "A global revolution has been taking place in HE during the past half century" and they argued that important forces have helped cause this revolution in the twenty-first century. These include the increasing availability of HE across the world and through globalisation, the knowledge society based on the use of information, particularly

by exploiting technological and communication advances. Caruana (2016, 56) took this argument further, relating it to TNE, and asserted that:

> "Transnational higher education is perhaps the most visible manifestation of the globalization, trade liberalization, and commodification of higher education in a borderless market, fuelled by huge increases in worldwide demand".

As part of the globalisation process, trade in education and goods has grown significantly over the last few years and education is now treated more like a commodity (Sakamoto and Chapman, 2011). The World Trade Organisation (WTO), in order to liberalise trade and services across the world, created the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) to give legally enforceable rights for countries that are part of this agreement (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2001). GATS has four modes in relation to education which are: Mode 1 Programme mobility; Mode 2 Student mobility; Mode 3 Institutional mobility; and Mode 4 Staff mobility (Healey, 2013). Interestingly, approximately 30% of HE student enrolments across the world are in the private not public sector (Altbach et al., 2009).

TNE has been, therefore, a major form of globalisation in HE over the last 25 years (Wilkins and Juusola, 2018) and has greatly expanded across the world as a result of these forces. At the same time, as Caruana and Montgomery (2015, 5) stated, globalisation is, "…..creating forces and tensions that promote changes which are somehow inter-related". The term of globalisation is not, however, a neutral term (Coverdale-Jones, 2013; Knight, 2008) and not without critics, as it can be understood by some as a Westernisation process in Asia (Coverdale-Jones, 2013), with economic, political and social implications which make it, as Knight (2008, 4) asserts, "probably the most pervasive and powerful feature of the changing environment".

As part of the globalisation process, the English language has become the most important and wide-ranging language of education and science across much of the world and has significantly influenced TNE and student mobility globally (Kell and Vogl, 2010; Altbach et al., 2009). Wilkins and Urbanovic (2018, 407) observed

that English is now the lingua franca of TNE and stated, “The economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions of globalisation have promoted the use of English as a language of communication among individuals and groups who do not share a common language”. The British Council (2018) asserted that language can be sensitive politically and culturally, particularly in Asian countries, with many of these Asian countries having more than one working language. Competence in the English language is thought to be important throughout most of Asia and English is often the language used in education. Escriva-Beltran et al. (2018, 7) argued that:

> “The general assumption is that the language of TNE HE programmes should be in English in order to obtain recognition as legitimate international programmes”.

Escriva-Beltran et al. (2018) also argued that students think English fluency skills are important for employment in multinational companies and so there is still a dependency on western countries, but this may change in the future. Mellors-Bourne (2017) also found that a key impact stated by many TNE alumni was an improvement in their English language skills.

This shaping of TNE and the movement of students across borders because of globalisation has also had effects on what is taught and how it is taught across the world (Altbach et al., 2010). Globalisation has, therefore, had an effect on the supply and demand of international education, and TNE in particular, giving students across the world many opportunities and options, but also challenges of how and where they can study. This has, at the same time, created a competitive international HE marketplace for HEIs (UK HE international Unit, 2016). Phan (2017) argued that what continues to advance TNE practice as part of the internationalisation agenda of HE and the status of English as the global language, is the view that the West is better and the wish to copy the West.

From what has been argued above, as a result of globalisation, cultural differences have had a significant impact on TNE (Hoare, 2006), both positive and negative. Cultural theoretical frameworks and concepts are, therefore, discussed in the next section, to help understand how these forces may exhibit themselves on student experiences and perceptions.

3.3 Cultural theoretical frameworks and concepts

Culture is a complicated concept that impacts upon most aspects of peoples' lives (Hoare, 2006) although Goh (2009) contended that the idea of a national culture is contentious as most countries now are multicultural in nature. This is particularly true of Malaysia, the focus of this research. Hall (1959, 217) stated that, "Culture is communication, and communication is culture". This communication (and sometimes lack of it) is a key issue in this research. According to Dahl (2004), there are various levels to culture, which, he argued, resemble layers of an onion. These levels vary from easy to see outer layers, like behaviour and practices, to inner layers which are more difficult to see, such as assumptions and values.

The word culture can have many interpretations and meanings (Hall, 1959). Gannon (2001, 21) argued that culture is a 'fuzzy concept' and stated that it also interacts with political, social and economic forces. Hofstede (1991) stated that culture is about patterns of thinking, feeling and acting and described this as 'software of the mind'. He further argued that culture is learned and not inherited. Hall (1959) also argued that culture is an activity that is learnt by people but also noted that it was a shared behaviour. Gannon (2001) pointed out that, perhaps, the most interesting feature about culture is that it triggers unconscious values leading to action. Hall (1959, 215) argued that in trying to understand culture it was better to first understand one's own culture before a foreign culture and stated, "we need more specific knowledge of ourselves as participants in culture". Minkov (2013, 17) argued that, "..culture can be construed in different ways, depending on a researcher's cultural background, professional affiliation, or idiosyncratic preferences, as well as a currently predominant fashion or other social factors".

The theoretical concepts of Bourdieu are important in relation to the discussion and understanding of TNE. Bourdieu (1996) put forward three important theoretical concepts: capital, habitus and field capital. These are relevant to this study and will be used to interpret the findings of my research and help better understand an individual's behaviour and performance. However, as Grenfell (2012) pointed out, it is important that capital, habitus and field are seen as one entity and, therefore, interconnected and not seen as separate parts.

Bourdieu (1996) argued that capital can be seen in four categories. These categories are: economic (e.g. financial resources), cultural (e.g. non-financial assets, such as physical appearance, spoken language, academic achievement), social (e.g. an individual's social network), and symbolic (e.g. prestige and recognition through awards) (Huang, 2019; Turnbull et al., 2019). Bourdieu interpreted capital as a legitimate, valuable and exchangeable resource that individuals can use to gain advantage in society (Turnbull et al., 2019). Turnbull et al. (2019, 6) argued that, "The value of capital is not solely determined by form, but also by factors such as the manner of acquisition, and the personal characteristics of the owner". Huang (2019, 45) also argued that, "The relationship between economic capital, social capital and cultural capital is transformational but non-replaceable".

The concept of cultural capital and its relationship to social reproduction is the part of Bourdieu's theory that has been most influential, and most useful for researchers (Waters, 2006; Sullivan, 2002). Kay et al. (2016, 42) explained that, "Bourdieu first coined the term cultural capital to describe the worldview, life experiences, and lifestyle preferences of select groups of people demarcated by their relations to the means of production". However, Bourdieu (1996) was aware that the concept of cultural capital was concerned mainly with France of the 1950s and 1960s but argued that it had broader applicability for other contexts as well and so his concepts offers a rich theoretical framework to understand and explain the experiences of students on their TNE journey and the value, if any, they place on it. It should be noted, however, that there has been limited literature to date on using Bourdieu's concepts in international education generally, and TNE in particular, although this is slowly changing (Sin, 2013).

Bourdieu (1996) distinguished between three forms or states of cultural capital: embodied (e.g. about knowledge and culture, skills provided by the family and school; long lasting dispositions of the mind and behaviours that are nurtured), objectified (e.g. the possession of material objects and media that stylistically reflect his status in the community such as books, paintings and an individual can acquire cultural capital through possessing them; material objects) and institutionalised (e.g. accredited knowledge and skills objectified through academic qualifications such as awards or certificates)(Ariffin, 2019; Sin, 2013). Huang

(2019, 42) stated that, “The institutionalized state of cultural capital makes possible the transformation from cultural capital to economic capital.”

Bourdieu (1996) argued that society is a multi-dimensional space consisting of a number of sub spaces or fields. These fields, which can overlap, are social settings forming a collective consciousness in which people live, work or play. The fields can be any number of contexts such as institutions, social groups or work places as well as rules, rituals, conventions (Webb et al., 2002). While entering these spaces or fields the individual always has with them the habitus. The habitus are the resources, the combination and the amount and type of capital that the individual will have. Each field or space has its own rules or doxa and according to those rules, the social group, at an aggregated level, will evaluate the individual and ascribe them their legitimate position in the field. Webb et al. (2002, 23) state that, “The amount of power a person has within a field depends on that person’s position within the field, and the amount of capital he or she possesses”.

For Bourdieu, habitus is the key and relates to the resource of knowledge, at the level of an unconscious set of bodily movements, dispositions and styles that shapes their attitudes, behaviours and responses that people carry with them to given situations (Bourdieu, 1996). It is an active and ongoing process, continually making history and about how people view and understand the world gained from a specific culture that an individual inhabits (Bourdieu, 1984). It focuses on how we act, feel and think. Maton (2012, 52) stated that habitus is “the link between past, present and future and between the social and the individual”. Huang (2019, 48) noted that, “The habitus for Bourdieu is usually very ingrained, and is capable of maintaining itself over a long period of time and can be understood, more generally, as the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts ... they are durable and transposable”. Maton (2012, 50) explained Bourdieu’s definition of habitus as, “A property of actors (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a structured and structuring structure – structured by one’s past and present circumstances such as family upbringing and educational experiences. And structuring in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices”. Maton (2012, 57) went on to argue, in relation to one’s habitus, that, “We learn, in short, our rightful place in the social world, where

we will do best given our dispositions and resources, and also where we will struggle". Turnbull (2019, 6) also argued that, "Whilst habitus is generally formed during childhood within the family, it is continually reconstructed and transformed as an individual operates in society", and it is through the habitus that social reproduction tkes place (Webb et al., 2002).

Turnbull, 2019, 6) stated that, "Capital, in its various forms, interacts with habitus, formed in relation to a field. Whilst capital is what determines one's position within the field, habitus is what determines one's disposition towards it". Following on from this view, and most importantly, Bourdieu (1996, 274) argued that, "Transformation of capital is the 'alchemy of exchange' of money, work, time into lasting obligations, either subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)".

A number of criticisms can be levelled at Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. For instance, Sullivan (2002) argued that the concept is not clearly defined, is vague and general and lacking in details. However, Grenfell (2012, 2) also argued that Bourdieu's concepts can be used in many academic disciplines, such as education and that "this applicability and adaptability is in many ways a measure of Bourdieu's approach to the social sciences". Grenfell (2012) went on to state that the link between theory and practice characterise Bourdieu's concepts and so using them as a lens to view this research is appropriate.

There are also a number of other cultural concepts that are important to recognise in helping to understand cultural issues of TNE. For instance, a number of authors have used the work of Hofstede (2011) and his 'cultural dimensions' in exploring cultural issues and challenges in TNE. The dimensions can be helpful in exploring and making sense of cultural differences, but Hofstede's model has also been criticised by a number of authors, particularly because it generalises national cultures (Bovill, 2015). The dimensions were based on his analysis of over 116,000 IBM employees in 72 countries in 20 different languages between 1967 and 1973 and originally published in 1980 as well as later work in China (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, 2001). The six dimensions of national culture are choices in which to allow patterns between and within cultures. Countries are given scores so that comparisons can be made between them.

There have been many similar frameworks to Hofstede's, but Gannon (2001) believed Hofstede's has proved to be the most influential, robust and useful, albeit at the same time controversial. The cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2011), with brief descriptions and where Malaysia and the UK fit within the dimensions (along with scores, out of a hundred, allocated to both countries by Hofstede), are discussed below in paragraph 3.4.5.

Other cultural concepts include 'intercultural sensitivity' which is being sensitive to the importance of cultural differences in societies and to the viewpoints of people in other cultures which can then help people assimilate and be capable to live and work without issues in cultures other than their own (Bhawuk and Brislin, 1992). Gannon (2001) discussed 'cultural metaphors' for understanding easily and quickly the cultural mind-set of a nation and comparing it to those of other nations. Gannon (2001, 7) argued cultural metaphors, "involve identifying some phenomenon, activity, or institution of a nation's culture that all or most of its members consider to be very important and with which they identify closely". The features of the cultural metaphor then become the basis for describing and understanding the essential characteristics of that culture. For example, in Malaysia, it is the return to the village or rural roots, the attachment Malaysians have with their roots and families (Gannon, 2001). Oberg (1960) introduced the concept of 'culture shock' which, he argued, starts with anxiety from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse and the cues we are used to following and understanding.

3.4 Cultural challenges in TNE

The flow of HE across international borders is filled with uncertainty such as cultural differences, the unpredictability of student markets and because governments can change which can mean the possibility of political uncertainty (Lane, 2011). To reduce the challenges encountered, it is vital that the experiences of those on their TNE journey are better understood from the student perspective as this has been a relatively neglected area in published research until quite recently.

3.4.1 Culture shock and cultural dislocation

Pyvis and Chapman (2005) looked at the risk of 'culture shock' to TNE students and referred to Oberg (1960) who initially conceptualised this term and identified

only a limited amount of research literature on the effects of 'culture shock' at that time. Research is also limited with regards to the experiences of foreign students in overseas HEIs as well as on feedback on students feeling marginalised or disadvantaged (Kelly and Moogan, 2012). Research on the initial period of culture shock and how long it takes to reasonably overcome it is also limited (Kelly and Moogan, 2012). Pyvis and Chapman (2005) discussed the characteristics of 'culture shock' which, they stated, include strain or stress relating to psychological adaptation; a sense of loss or deprivation resulting from the removal of friends, status, role, and personal possessions; fear or rejection by or rejection of a new culture; confusion in role definition; unexpected anxiety, disgust or indignation regarding cultural differences; and feelings of helplessness, including confusion, frustration and depression. They claimed that the risk of 'culture shock' and cultural acclimatisation is no less of a problem for TNE students than for students travelling to another country. TNE students can also find themselves in foreign environments, with different approaches and values in learning and teaching to that they have been used to in their past which may clash with their expectations (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005). This would also apply to international students studying TNE in a different country to their own, which is now common in a country like Malaysia, the focus of my research.

However, although culture shock is now better known, 'academic shock' is less well recognised (Ryan and Carroll, 2005b). Ryan and Carroll (2005b, 6-7) argued that academic shock is when:

> "…students experience their confidence plummeting, they question their precious self-evaluation as competent learners, and they may even lose their knowledge about how to learn and succeed".

Although there can be difficulties and negative feelings resulting from culture shock, there can be real positive experiences as well for students (and staff), such as personal growth through adjusting to new cultures and ways of doing things and finding out different world views (Zapf, 1991). There can be, therefore, real positive benefits to students as well as debilitating effects of culture shock.

Pyvis and Chapman (2005, 28) discussed the concept of 'cultural dislocation' and argued that most attention so far has, in terms of "cultural difficulties", been on the 'travelling educator' (i.e. the lecturer travelling overseas from the home university to teach foreign students) rather than TNE students themselves. They argued that training one of the participants in cultural interaction does not really present a solution to all of the challenges. This is particularly so in this research study where most of the teaching is carried out by the host institution. The main contact with the host institution by the sending institution is with link tutors from the sending institution who carry out limited teaching on the programmes.

3.4.2 Learning and teaching and culture

It is also imperative to consider cultural awareness within learning and teaching practice. Keevers et al. (2014) asserted that teaching in TNE is a complicated process involving many different people, cultures, types of programme and modes of study and raising challenges for students and staff alike. Because of this complicated process, Leask (2006) identified four types of cultural knowledge, not in any order of priority, required for effective teaching:

1. Understanding of local cultures including the political, legal and economic environment;
2. Understanding of how the teacher's own culture affects the way they think, feel and act;
3. Understanding of how culture affects how we interact with others; and
4. Understanding of social, cultural and educational backgrounds of students.

It could be argued, however, that these are skills that should be understood, practiced and developed by all lecturers, not just for TNE teaching, and are applicable to host and sending institution lecturers.

Allen (2014) argued that TNE lecturers should be prepared to engage with the culture of the country to which they have gone to, and must be willing to alter their way of doing things to meet the learning needs of the culture's educational system they are teaching in. She also found that sending institutions must consider carefully about their TNE partners and be open to ideas and good practice from the partner's

learning and teaching culture. This two-way learning process is often not well developed between the host and sending institutions. It could be argued that many TNE lecturers need to learn about and better understand intercultural issues, as Leake (2006) has suggested. Many lecturers need to widen their horizons about cultural awareness by learning from new experiences in a TNE context, and to, as Melano et al. (2012, 8) argued, "acknowledge the variety in teaching styles and different traditions of education that their students may have experienced". Ziguras (2008) suggested that such understanding of cultural issues is rare among new teaching staff and even variable amongst experienced teaching staff. However, he stated that most TNE delivery involves locally employed teaching staff (as is the case in this research) and they are usually in the best position to localise foreign educational materials and act as 'cultural intermediaries' between foreign academics and students. This may not be quite as simple, however, as Ziguras (2008) has suggested, because of the sending institutions' quality assurance processes which many insist on certain standards and procedures being adhered to. This is in contrast, in part, to the emphasis on the 'travelling educator' mentioned by Chapman and Pyvis (2005) above. For instance, Arunasalam (2013) found on a flying faculty programme in Malaysia, that the views and experiences of the students (who were student nurses) highlighted the difference between Malaysian and Western assumptions and expectations. She found that there was a contrast in the teaching and learning outlook, in professional values and clinical practices, between the students and the flying faculty lecturers from the UK, which affected the students' confidence and learning. Arunasalam (2016) also found that the lack of intercultural awareness by western academics caused issues of misunderstandings and miscommunications.

De Costa (2018, 1) stated that, "…..a negative outcome of TNE is that it can promote institutional racism through the adoption of 'rent-a-foreigner' hiring practices". He argued that western lecturers are often used instead of local lecturers and that foreign lecturers are often white with English skills more valued over the local lecturers' language skills and frequently paid less than their Western counterparts.

Waterval, et al. (2015) found in their literature review of TNE, that copying of curricula for TNE programmes was not a wise way forward. They argued that having the same curriculum as the sending institution for the TNE programme is to give a comparable educational product to the host institution and their students without taking into account the host institution needs and any culturally sensitive issues. Egege and Kutielah (2008) discussed cultural dominance and cultural difference and argued that the perceived differences between cultures have less impact on teaching and learning than believed and striving to address differences by developing culturally specific teaching practices is fraught with difficulties and runs counter to the aims and objectives of TNE. Egege and Kutielah (2008, 67) also observed that, "no education is neutral because of the effects of culture". Marginson (2003), cited in Bolton and Nie (2010, 702), however, suggested the profit motive often dominates cross-cultural teaching and learning objectives and observed that, "the cultural diversity of students is respected up to and including the point at which they hand over their money. After that they have to take what they are given".

Hoare (2010) explored some of the tensions in TNE. These tensions included the adhoc nature of preparation of lectures by academic staff and the problematic process of negotiating intercultural issues of learning. Hoare (2010) found that experienced teaching staff were not always helpful to students and students found it difficult navigating through the Australian way of doing things. This included the inapproriateness of some teaching materials and curriculum. She argued that there was a Western bias as there was limited localisation of material, with lecturers showing little flexibility and adaptability and as a result, assessments were confusing to students which did not help their understanding and learning. Annabi et al. (2018, 294) argued that, "….TNE policy tends to adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach across all international settings, thus failing to recognise the importance of cultural preservation and sensitivity". This one-size-fits-all approach by HEIs, and the seemingly lack of cultural awareness because of it, may eventually have a detrimental effect and put students off TNE (Annabi et al., 2018). However, it also may be what students are actually seeking.

From a teaching point of view, Keevers et al. (2014) asserted that professional development for TNE lecturers should be collaborative between the host and sending institutions. In particular, Keevers et al. (2014, 246) argued that,

"Strengthening social relations and trust amongst TNE teaching team members enhances their capacity to create collaborative learning spaces amongst students studying in diverse cultural contexts". They believed that by doing this it would benefit TNE students by giving their lecturers opportunities to talk and work together with the sending institution lecturers and so giving lecturers and students a sense of belonging to the sending institution.

Keay et al. (2014, 253) found that some staff at sending institutions did not know about TNE or know that their institution has their students studying overseas on TNE programmes. They argued that:

> "Communication could be improved, within and across institutions and their overseas partners, about the extent and purpose of their involvement in TNE. Such clarity may help students studying transnationally to identify with, or even feel a sense of belonging to, the award bearing UK institution".

Knight and McNamara (2014) also found that there was a lack of awareness of TNE in host countries. They found that prospective students, some lecturers (sometimes in their own institution) and employers did not always know and fully understand what a TNE student academic experience involved.

Keay et al. (2014) asserted that 'Communities of Practice', with participation from teaching and administrative staff, and students, would help true collaborative partnership working and help provide a high-quality learning experience for TNE students with opportunities for designing and delivering TNE programmes. Keay et al. (2014) also argued that by collaboratively working, staff can gain much from each other and from students because of their varied experiences, backgrounds and cultures. However, Mahmud et al. (2010) found that developing 'Communities of Practice' can be a difficult because of the commitment and extra effort needed by staff members as well as the high staff turnover in host countries. Mahmud et al. (2010, 7) also argued that institutions needed to support 'Communities of Practice' and not see TNE institutions as 'remote outposts' with no real trust, and stated that, "Authentic dialogue and collaboration are capacity building for both institutions in a TNE partnership, benefit both domestic and TNE student learning and should be supported at institutional level". Keay et al. (2014, 262) found that there was a need

for institutions to develop further an element of reciprocity within interaction in TNE contexts and argued that, "the benefit of mutual help as occurring between students, staff and students and between staff, could be recognised and fostered".

3.4.3 Silence and culture

An important cultural issue of TNE is that of how students (and staff) may behave. Arunasalam (2016) argued that the Malaysian students' polite, silent nature and behaviour is part of their cultural background and western academics need to be aware of this. She found that the students were determined to gain their qualifications despite their silent nature in class knowing that being silent in class did not signify a lower academic ability. Arunasalam (2016, 2) stated that:

> "The reluctance to participate in the classroom seems to be due to the classroom etiquette as preferred and defined by the home culture rather than the approach to learning or ability".

It is, therefore, important that the culture of TNE students' needs are better understood and taken into account, especially by western academics and partners. In trying to better understand these issues, King (2013, 338) proposed a taxonomy to help understand the reasons for silent behaviours in class which consisted of, "Silence of disengagement; Silence of teacher centred methods; Silence of non-verbal activities; Silence of confusion; and Silence of hypersensitivity to others".

King (2013) gave a number of reasons why students chose to be silent such as, to avoid criticism, ridicule, rejection, punishment, having different opinions, win approval, acceptance or appreciation. King (2013) also stated that students may prefer to be silent as a need to ensure opinions are the same as others, to protect each other's face for interpersonal harmony, not having correct answers, making mistakes, giving wrong answers and feelings of competence of others. Arunasalam (2016, 2) also found that, "The students also wanted to save face as they felt they may be perceived as stupid to ask the question. To avoid others considering them stupid, they kept quiet". Arunasalam (2013, 168) asserted that:

> "In spite of many negative feelings towards their TNE programmes, with their language and academic difficulties, [*the students*] demonstrated

> resilience to the cultural and learning shock of such an intense programme….. The nurses appeared to have made the necessary adjustments to meet the assessment criteria and achieve their degrees successfully".

The research of Arunasalam (2013) appeared to confirm that TNE students are often flexible enough to overcome cultural and other obstacles that may be put in their way.

3.4.4 Quality assurance and culture

There can be serious tensions between the host and sending institutions in terms of quality assurance. On the one hand, the UK sending institution has a direct responsibility for the academic standards and quality of the programme with its own reputation on the line if successful or not. On the other hand, the host institution has the advantage of having a link with, and offering an award from the host institution, but has its own government regulations and procedures to take into account as well as the expectations and backgrounds of their students (and family).

It is not surprising, therefore, that very close attention is paid by the sending institution to academic standards and quality assurance of their partnerships. This is due to the sending country's regulatory body but also the potential reputational damage, which can be huge, that may occur to the sending institution if things go wrong (Pyvis, 2011). This view is echoed by Heffernan et al. (2010) and is probably a key cause of concern and challenge across all of TNE.

Westerheijden (Date unknown, 22) discussed the dilemma of comparable quality against sensitivity to local cultures. This challenge is being taken up by many quality agencies across the world. However, it will be some time for all countries to come up with solutions as 'reputational risk' is still high on the political agenda in sending countries and the quality benchmark of the home programme is still an easy solution to a difficult problem. This also needs to be offset by host countries normally wanting (including the students and their families) a western style education and a western qualification that are easily transferable, highly prized and paradoxically, of a high-quality because of the low risk approach of quality agencies that is often criticized in research literature. However, as O'Mahony (2014, 38)

argued, “An over-emphasis on trying to offer the same qualification can lead to educational and cultural imperialism”.

Wilkins and Juusola (2018) argued against the point of view that TNE is of a lower quality than home programmes. For UK programmes, there are Quality Assurance Agency audits of TNE programmes, and in Malaysia, the Malaysia Quality Agency as the regulatory body, has an important quality remit. Wilkins and Juusola (2018, 75) went on and stated that, “…..quality assurance has become an established and fast developing part of TNE, which helps ensure that the quality of TNE programmes is of an acceptable standard”. It could be argued, however, that there are conflicting interests in TNE such as the need to increase student numbers against maintaining the academic quality of the programmes (Wilkins and Juusola, 2018), but it could also be argued that these are tensions in all of HE whether at home or part of TNE.

From a student point of view, Hohner and Tsigaris (2012) argued that students’ perception of quality is important but little research has been carried out on their experience. Chapman and Pyvis (2006) stated that students often believed TNE is of higher quality than local universities and so would help them in achieving career goals. Hoare (2011) found that students from developing nations also had views about the quality of TNE programmes based on a variety of sources including the reputation and accreditation of the western university, information from former students about the programme, the partner’s faculty research and teaching abilities, admissions requirements into the programme, and the potential to study abroad.

3.4.5 National culture and TNE

Hofstede’s work has been cited many times after it was first published. It has been used in many social research projects as it was designed to help understand how national culture can impact on situations (Eldridge and Cranston, 2009).

The six dimensions, with brief descriptions along with scores for the UK and Malaysia, are outlined below:

Individualism versus collectivism is the extent to which society members are integrated with each other, into groups. In individualist societies, everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate families whilst in collectivist societies, people are integrated into strong cohesive groups often in extended families where loyalty is very important, and where offence can lead to shame and loss of face. Malaysia (26) is on the collectivist side showing a tight social network and family -oriented society whilst the UK (89) is on the individualist side characterised by a more loosely knit social framework based on the individual.

Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of organisations and institutions, like families, accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents high inequality. It implies that a society's level of inequality is allowed by the followers as much as by the leaders. In countries performing high on this dimension there is, for instance, teacher-centred teaching, obedience to parents and subordinates expect to be told what to do. Malaysia (100) shows high on this dimension accepting hierarchical order whilst the UK (35) shows low

Masculinity versus femininity is the degree to which a society attaches importance to those qualities usually perceived as typical of men [e.g. assertiveness, material achievement] and those believed as more feminine [e.g. consideration of relationship, other people and the environment]. Malaysia (50) shows low to average for masculinity as there is no particular distinction of how roles are distributed according to gender. This may signify equality between the gender roles in Malaysia and so a preference for this dimension cannot be determined. On the other hand, the UK (66) shows higher on this dimension meaning it is a more masculine society.

Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which society members feel threatened by unknown situations and avoid uncertainty. It is how a society deals with the situation that the future is unknown. Uncertainty avoiding societies try to reduce the chance of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute truth. Malaysia (36) has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. This suggests that Malaysia has a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity with no more rules than necessary.

Schedules tend to be flexible, hard work carried out when needed with punctuality not well understood. The UK (35) also has a low preference for uncertainty avoidance.

Long Term versus Short Term Orientation is how a society has to maintain at least some links with its past while at the same time dealing with challenges of the present and of the future. Societies displaying a long-term time orientation will be more concerned with the future and focus their efforts on future-orientated goals whilst societies displaying a short-term orientation will be more concerned with the past and present and will focus on the short-term. Malaysia (41) has a relatively low preference displaying a tendency for short term orientation with a need for establishing the truth, having great respect for traditions with a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. From Hofstede's data, a dominant preference in UK (51) culture cannot be determined.

Indulgence versus restraint is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called "Indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "Restraint". Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or Restrained. Malaysia's (57) culture is one of Indulgence. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism and place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish. The UK (69) is also indulgent.

Eldridge and Cranston (2009) examined the effect of national culture on the management of TNE using Hofstede's (2001) cultural value dimensions as an analytical framework. They found, in line with Heffernan et al. (2010) and Pyvis (2011), that the national cultural differences had effects on the organisation of academic activities such as pedagogy, assessment and student socialising. Eldridge and Cranston (2009) also found that the organisation of operational management of TNE, including communications and interaction in the partnership, and procedures and regulations were affected by cultural differences.

Komives and Roberts (2016) discussed the problem of a power imbalance with countries from the West transferring education to countries in the East and South, often at high prices. They saw this as a way to help the economies of those countries in the West by exploiting the growing economies of the countries in the East and South. However, Komives and Roberts (2016) also argued that there is a responsibility on countries in the West involved in educational trade, to ensure that they examine critically the programmes and practices that they offer are adapted appropriately.

He and Liu (2018) observed that there are often cross-cultural conflicts between host and sending countries involved in TNE and the best practices to overcome these challenges are about conflict resolution. In particular, He and Liu (2018) recommended cooperation between partners, including collaborating and compromising, to overcome any barriers of cultural differences, and the adaptability of students.

3.4.6 Students and culture

Miliszewska and Sztendur (2012) highlighted the need for incorporating student perspectives in the provision of TNE programmes. They referred to Chapman and Pyvis (2005, 40) who argued that no one is in a better position to comment on these experiences than students themselves as, "they are the ultimate 'insiders and experts': yet the voice of the student is conspicuously missing from the research literature". It should also be noted that by including students, there can be positive outcomes for all stakeholders in TNE. Miliszewska and Sztendur (2012) found in their research from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam that most of the students thought that their TNE programmes were beneficial. The students, in particular, mentioned a number of real positive outcomes of their TNE learning experiences including programme structure and flexibility, relevance to job and career, opportunity to obtain a foreign degree without leaving their country, and the opportunity to experience western teaching methods.

Kutty (2014, 57) found that TNE students aim of achieving a degree was to improve their life chances by accumulating capital for career purposes. However, this aim is not always achieved. Waters and Leung (2013) found, for instance, that students

were less able to acquire social capital on TNE programmes, thus affecting their social mobility.

Hoare (2006) explored the practices of TNE programmes in Singapore which helped her clarify some of the tensions in TNE. These included, the adhoc nature of preparation and sometimes absence of substantial preparation; and the problematic process of negotiating intercultural issues of learning. She found that experienced academics were not always helpful to the students and the inappropriateness of some of the teaching materials and curriculum showed a Western bias with little customisation, adaptability and localisation by lecturers (Hoare, 2010). Caruana and Montgomery (2015) also found that that the TNE programmes were not very adaptable to local needs and circumstances, and so not always helpful to the students' futures. Caruana and Montgomery (2015) also stated that TNE programmes generally do not involve travel abroad so students are at a disadvantage of acquiring social and cultural capital. From these disadvantages, they asserted that there can be social class inequalities.

In reviewing the TNE literature, it appears that challenges and negative issues often outweigh the positive aspects of TNE. Where positives are put forward there is sometimes little research to back it up. As Cuthbert et al. (2008, 261) stated, "the benefits of TNE are often-asserted, but rarely established." To counteract the negativity that TNE often attracts, Hoare (2012, 283) related, what she called, a "good news" story from her research. She found students were developing transformative learning and career outcomes through their motivation and confidence building on their TNE programmes and so developing their human capital. Wilkins and Juusola (2018) also found that the students were satisfied with their TNE experience because it gave them a measure of flexibility not available in other HE programmes. Wilkins and Juusola (2018), in addition, found that students acknowledged that their TNE programmes helped them develop their intercultural awareness and competence as well as opportunities to better develop their careers. Wilkins and Juusola (2018) argued that because of international competition for TNE and the regulatory demands from western quality assurance regulators, there has been an improvement in the quality of TNE programmes thus enhancing the student experience and their overall satisfaction. Montgomery (2009, 268) found

that students were open to the concept of internationalisation and mostly were happy to interact with other nationalities in group work. They saw this as an opportunity to develop personal, professional and intercultural skills.

In continuing the 'good news story' of TNE, Van-Couter (2018) found that the career prospects of TNE students appeared to be good compared to other types of graduates. He argued that employers placed great emphasis on developing soft skills as well as proficiency in English and critical thinking skills. Van-Couter (2018) also found that students and parents placed a premium and value on truly international TNE programmes because of their international recognition and the value employers placed on them.

However, Scott (1999) cited in Robinson-Plant (2005, 153) argued that, "the Western idea of critical thinking is actually culturally specific but presented in the literature…as the universal norm". Turner (1999) also cited in Robinson-Plant (2005, 153) stated that, "The Western tradition of academic writing, with the emphasis on clarity of focus and a tight structure is considered to be an undisputable value". As part of this debate, the Higher Education Academy (2014) discussed critical thinking and argued much has been written on the supposed lack of critical thinking skills among international students and that many see critical thinking as fundamental to Western thinking. However, there is still debate about whether critical thinking or ways of thinking are universal or culture- or context-specific.

The British Council (2013, 19) found that employers believed the following intercultural skills are important, and often over and above technical abilities and formal qualifications, "International experiences (i.e. study abroad, internships abroad, or international work experience); Strong communication skills; Foreign language skills; and Cultural sensitivity".

Malik (2012) observed that TNE students showed more allegiance to the TNE programme they were studying on and to each other than the sending institution and took the view that face-to face teaching was important in order to motivate and support them. These are important findings and lessons to sending institutions and

showed that HEIs must now ensure that, as much as possible, face to face learning should be considered to satisfy student demand and enhance their learning.

It is not only local Malaysian students that are studying on TNE programmes in Malaysia. Malaysia attracts students from other countries to its UK TNE programmes, with many coming from North Africa as well as South East Asia (Jenkins, 2015). Students may prefer to study in Malaysia partly because it is cheaper than studying in the UK as well as the Islamic culture and safe environment, but they perceive that they are receiving a UK education. Ahmad and Buchanan (2016) in discussing international students choosing Malaysia as a country to study in stated, that most of the students in their study said that their friends, relatives and family members helped them make their decision. Ahmad and Buchanan (2016, 172) also stated that the students were, "influenced by the family members' and friends' own experience or stories about the country and reported a relatively high level of satisfaction with the image of Malaysia".

The understanding and responding to the distinct TNE student communities and their experiences are important and should be taken into account by UK HEIs and their partners. As Malik (2012, 1) stated, "The TNE student community is different in many respects from traditional on-campus students". He argued that TNE students often have different learning skills and so the skills they seek are different. Being aware and acknowledging these differences in how the curriculum is developed and learning and teaching styles are delivered are therefore essential in producing successful TNE partnerships and TNE student satisfaction.

Examples of key issues in respect to TNE student experiences were highlighted by UK HE international Unit (2016, 13) as:

> "The opportunities offered for cultural experience when studying a TNE programme given that TNE students rank developing intercultural competence highly and learning opportunities at TNE campuses differing from standards of the awarding university".

Hoare (2006) observed that cultural issues have an important impact on TNE students and that this is largely not appreciated by TNE stakeholders. Choudada

(2013) also asserted that in the future more attention needs to be made of the students' needs in this ever increasing competitive and global world. In reinforcing the point, Malik (2012, 1) argued that:

> "The importance of partnerships, proper delivery of curriculum, and catering to the needs of local TNE students are essential to the sustainability and competitiveness of UK TNE programmes. Universities cannot just apply UK courses to local markets".

Knight and McNamara (2014) argued that the main motivation for students choosing a TNE programme is for career development as they perceive TNE as an advantage for their career by developing professional skills. Knight and McNamara (2014) were unsure, however, on the value employers place on TNE when employing graduates and they felt more research is required to find out the employers' views. There has been much discussion on the skills that TNE students need gain and use once they graduate because, as the British Council (2013, 19) report stated, "The modern workplace is increasingly global". Knight and McNamara (2014) asserted that graduates require skills such as problem solving, critical thinking skills and an international outlook. However, they argued that the skills gained on a TNE programme are not necessarily always filling the skills gaps needed in the host country. Mellors-Bourne (2015) asserted that a key skill that employers look for is intercultural sensitivity in order to engage internationally, The British Council (2013, 19) also found that, "When employees lack intercultural skills, employers risk miscommunication between teams and team conflict". However, Mellors-Bourne (2015) doubted, from his research, that TNE programmes always develop these intercultural skills.

Mellors-Bourne (2015) found that TNE students were not necessarily getting an international experience and felt that they needed to build into programmes an overseas study period to help students gain these intercultural skills. He found, interestingly, that overseas students studying on a TNE programme probably gain the most benefits as they are gaining intercultural understanding through their international experience as well as other key skills, such as self-reliance because they are studying away from their home environment.

3.4.7 The family and culture

There have been social and cultural changes among Malaysian families since gaining independence from British rule (Ng, 1998). The family in Malaysia is a complex mix of different influences, histories and cultures including Malay, Chinese, Indian and other Asian countries. As Ng (1998, 38-39) observed, "Each family has its roots in different civilizations and has required long periods of cultural adaptation to the local environment". The Malaysian family is, therefore, an intricate mix of many influences and cultures.

Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field, discussed above, are important in relation to the family and the accumulation of that capital. How this capital is converted by individuals and groups so as to maintain or increase their social positions in the world is a complex process and is the main focus of Bourdieu's theory (Yüksek, 2018). Bourdieu (1996, 274) described this transformation of capital as "the alchemy of exchange" of money, work, time into lasting obligations, either subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)".

Parents play an important and early role in influencing the expectations of students by their social background (i.e. the parents' education, occupations, income, family size) and, therefore, the economic and human capital they can give to their children (Wells et al., 2011). Wells et al. (2011, 4/6) asserted that, "Parental expectations are a direct form of students' social capital; parents communicate the value and expectation they have for their children's post-secondary educational attainment". They also argued that, "Parental involvement, another form of social capital, is a key predictor of students' educational expectations and other educational outcomes".

Kutty (2014) studied the aspirations and decision-making of first-generation students and what motivates students with no family history of HE. He found, in particular, that the family background, including the education of the parents, their occupations and incomes, was important in influencing their children's aspirations. In addition, the parental aspirations regarding the university education for their children had an impact on their children's aspirations. Kutty (2014, 56**)** stated that,

"First-generation students often take pride in bringing honour and respect to their families, especially for being first in the family to be awarded a degree". The family, family background and their aspirations, therefore, are central to influencing decisions of students.

Tsigaris (2015) also reported that students are influenced by their relationships with their parents, friends and others when making decisions about their future education. Kutty (2014, 50) argued that the career aspirations of students not only come from their own personal interests but also from parental expectations and that, "Parental encouragement, expectations and involvement in the child's education can compensate for disadvantages associated with social class background". Lee and Morrish (2012, 63) found that "education is the key to the family's happiness, and parents will invest in their children to ensure the family's wellbeing".

Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakadis (2011) found that factors influencing students were many and varied between personal motivation and socio-cultural reasons. These factors included self-motivation as well as family-based motivations, parents' expectations, siblings, social networks and environment (e.g. relatives, friends, extra-familial adults, peers) along with role of teachers and school. Wells et al. (2011, 20) argued that, "Parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer influence all positively affect college-degree expectations for both men and women". Kutty (2014) also found that the students' educational aspirations are indirectly related to their parents' expectations. Crucially, though, Kutty (2014, 50) found that a student whose parents had experienced the HE system, "…normally grows up with more college-related cultural capital and knowledge about university and has a clear and more systematic educational plan".

The extended family, with the social networks of family and friends, also has an impact on the motivations and experiences of students. Kutty (2014) found that older siblings, who had an HE education, generated cultural capital for the family and had an influence on the aspirations of students and their subsequent careers. The extended family members, therefore, act as role models for the students (Crozier and Davies, 2006). However, Crozier and Davies, (2006, 692) argued that although the extended family has value to students, the social capital they can derive

from it has limited value "in terms of accessing high status educational knowledge that in turn could have a high-level impact on the child's educational achievement".

Another important aspect of support and acquisition of social capital is by student peer groups. Wells et al. (2011, 7) argued that:

> "Students' socialization via peer groups plays a critical role in the postsecondary education preparation process. Students who report having peers with postsecondary education plans are more likely to enrol than those without such peer influences".

However, the accumulation of capital and the subsequent mobility up and through the social hierarchy is not straightforward or guaranteed. Waters and Leung (2013, 158) noted that, "the role that social relationships can play in enabling the conversion of academic credentials (institutionalised cultural capital) into economic capital and…reproducing the privilege of some whilst inhibiting the social mobility of others". Wells et al. (2011, 2) also argued:

> "Social advantage is largely transmitted through institutional and systemic agents that maintain the status quo such that one's privileged position is preserved across generations…..and educational attainment was the best way to break the cycle of poverty and thus, the reproduction of social inequality".

Mellors-Bourne (2017) found from their research on TNE alumni that there were only modest reported levels of social development impact.

3.4.8 Westernisation and neo-colonialism and the possible effects on the TNE student journey

Nguyen et al. (2009, 123-124) defined neo-colonialism in education as, "the inappropriate wholesale adoption of western educational theories and practices". They highlighted the potential problems when educational approaches are transplanted to other countries and cultures without any or little thought being given to the culture and background of the host country. Nguyen et al. (2009, 123-124) argued that this can result in, "academic ineffectiveness, serious neglect of cultural assets, weakening of the host culture's own research capacity and may perpetuate a sense of dependency on the part of formally colonised host cultures". Wang (2008) found that it is problematic to transplant western theories to non-western countries

without considering local contexts and cultures. He suggested that intercultural dialogue is a complex and multidimensional process and more complex than just 'cultural borrowing' from another culture which is perceived to be more advanced. There is, Wang (2008) argued, a need for intercultural understanding and critical accommodation of Western ideas, and cultural sensitivity of TNE by both Western and non-Western societies.

There can be historic reasons, as in Malaysia, where colonial influences from the former colonial power (the British in this case) can have a profound effect on TNE (Kell and Vogl, 2010). This can lead to what Hoare (2010, 47) calls, "Unconscious educational imperialism". TNE can also be a means of 'soft power' for the sending country, which could be seen almost as a modern-day form of colonialism (Wilkins and Juusola, 2018). Phan (2017, 220) argued that, "Nowhere in education have the colonial ties with Britain been celebrated as much as they have in TNE contexts and settings" and Malaysia has been promoting the legacies of British education in their current HE systems for some time to their advantage. Phan (2017,221) asserted that, "The English language and the English medium programmes are two shared selling points in all these promotional initiatives".

Some researchers, according to Alam et al. (2013), have expressed concerns about over-westernisation of unique Asian cultures, languages, traditions and heritages. Alam et al., (2013) argued in order to avoid over-westernisation, Asian universities may wish to rediscover Asian scholarship, unique values, traditions and cultures through academic exchange and international research collaboration within Asia. Arunasalam (2016, 3) also argued that TNE students often feel a sense of inequality and inferiority because of the past colonial history and influences and, "the idealised merits of western education" when dealing with western academics when they teach TNE students.

There is little evidence from TNE research generally that the view of host institutions is fully considered as part of the TNE debate and the issue of cross-cultural sensitivities although this appears to be changing. Where the host institution's view is taken into account it is often through the lens of a western approach. Jianxin (2009) took a much stronger view of western style education in

a TNE context. He stated that TNE normally expects that students will adapt to the sending institution's model of education and their value system which will usually be at variance to the students' own country's social, cultural and political standpoint. He further argued that the students are expected to adapt to the sending institution's learning and teaching model rather than the other way around. Jianxin (2009) argued that TNE may be considered a type of cultural offence and that a country should try to retain its own cultural identity. Jianxin (2009) observed that securing a country's cultural security is an important part of the country's national security. Yang (2008) reinforced this view by stating that cultural appropriateness has major implications for TNE provision and having, what he called a 'global template', can separate education (he was writing about China) from a country's society, culture and politics. If this is indeed the case for all countries, then institutions must take into account, and fully understand, the cultural sensitivities of TNE before going ahead with developing partnerships overseas.

Phan (2017, 31) argued that, "the cultural politics and geopolitics associated with TNE and the 'West' and 'Asia' is not solely the West's game". She argued that Asia is certainly not naïve in doing this and may have a genuine desire for, what she calls, the 'imagined' West. Asian countries, Phan (2017) argued, have been part of the process in using what she calls "elitist western superiority" to further its own plans. However, Phan (2017,218) made the argument that, "TNE has been a disguise for neo-colonialism and mediocrity" and that, "global quality has been mostly substituted with mediocrity in reality".

De Costa (2018), in critiquing the research of Phan (2017), agreed with her view on neo-colonialism. He stated that TNE has had many critics, particularly because of the export of western types of HE to Asia which he believed, like Phan, was a form of neo-colonialism. However, unlike Phan, he argued that Asian countries were being coerced into forming partnerships and campuses. De Costa (2018) was particularly concerned at the neoliberal characteristics of TNE, with students as customers and English as the language they are taught in. De Costa (2018, 1), therefore, argued that, "English becomes a commodity, a means toward realising an end that can potentially have negative social implications". However, the argument about TNE being a form of neo-colonialism is disputed by many. For instance,

Coelen (2018, 1) argued that neo-colonialism was very much, "a 'caricatured sketch of TNE" and he disagreed with many of the views expressed by Phan and De Costa. Wilkins and Juusola (2018) argued that although many people claim that TNE is a type of neo-colonialism because there is a divide between the developed and developing worlds, TNE actually performs a balance against neo-colonialism. They justified this view by arguing that in recent years the flow of knowledge is from all directions in the world, not just from West to East.

However, Wilkins (2018), when discussing international branch campuses (IBCs), made the point that IBCs are now often called global campuses rather than branch campuses. He argued that this change of title may be because of accusations of neo-colonialism in the past and so the IBC is not seen as a foreign outpost. Wilkins, (2018) also argued, though, that, these name changes are often done with the agreement and support of the host country governments and regulators. Coelen (2018) agreed with the views of Wilkins (2018) and stated that his own IBC is now known as a multi-campus university rather than an IBC to avoid any accusations of neo-colonialism.

Sardar (1999, 57) argued that non-western countries needed to resist colonial and neo-colonial influences and argued that:

> "Resistance to Eurocentricism, and hence development, can only come from non-western concepts and categories. The non-western cultures and civilisations have to reconstruct themselves……..with their own world views…..This means that the non-west has to create a whole new body of knowledge, rediscover its lost and suppressed intellectual heritage, and shape a host of new disciplines".

However, as Nguyen et al. (2009) also argued, this is not easy thing to achieve because of the past speed of development of TNE up until now. It may also be that it is not necessarily an 'either or' situation, but more a coming together of different cultures. As Goh (2009, 132) argued, "Like all the grand enduring eras in the chronicles of human endeavour, we may be witnessing the emergence of a new civilisation – perhaps a hybrid culture as a result of the convergence of cultures".

3.5 Reputation, image and branding

Students and parents appear to place emphasis on reputation and branding, as well as global recognition of TNE courses, which act as real pull factors in the choice of institution (Van-Couter, 2018). However, the QAA (2018) also argued that value for money is of equal importance for TNE students as reputation and brand of the UK sending institution. The academic reputation of HEIs also appears to be highly rated by students in choosing which university to study at (Obermeit, 2012). However, in contrast, Malik (2012) argued that employment opportunities from the results of TNE are more important to TNE students than the institution's brand. He argued that TNE students are more concerned about how their degree supports their career aspirations in contrast to the reputation of the sending institution. However, the QAA (2018) found that the UK brand is important for the future of UK TNE. The QAA (2018, 2) argued that, "….it is timely to reflect on how the sector will continue to project the 'UK brand' in relation to quality assurance, to maintain international confidence and ensure high-quality experiences for all students". The brand and reputation of a country's TNE provision is, therefore, inextricably linked to quality which gives confidence to students and their families that they will receive a high-quality student experience.

Wilkins and Huisman (2015, 1268), although only looking at IBCs, found that students often rely less on factual information to make their decision as to where to study and more on "perceived institutional images". They also found that cultural factors and the influence of parents, lecturers and other students was very important in their choices. They argued because of these 'interpersonal' cultural influences on students, institutions should manage carefully how they pass on information to all the stakeholders, including to the parents of students, employers as well as the students themselves. To do this effectively they advocated, "a comprehensive and integrated communications strategy" because parents and others may well be influenced more by branding and reputation of HEIs (Wilkins et al. (2017, 11). Complementing the findings from Wilkins and Huisman (2015), Kharouf et al. (2015) argued that an HEI with a trustworthy image will be important in the market place, as students will trust them in order that they can meet their wishes. HEIs, therefore, need to develop trustworthiness with their students

Word of mouth is an important aspect of information before choices are made and can have a key role in how consumers form their opinions resulting in satisfied and therefore repeat customers (Herold et al. 2016). Heffernan et al. (2018) observed that the reputation of an institution takes time to develop giving positive student experiences with resulting loyalty from students. They go on to argue that the reputation of an institution is enhanced through word of mouth by positive student experiences. Wilkins et al. (2017) stated that prestige and reputation of HEIs often have more influence on prospective students and they are more likely to identify with them than learning and teaching standards alone. Knight and McNamara (2014) concurred with this view, that the prestige and status of sending institutions are important as well as the foreign country's education system because of the international outlook and cultural experience to be gained by TNE students. Wilkins et al. (2017) also argued that the country of the sending institution has status and prestige in the eyes of prospective students even if the HEI has a lower ranking in tables in the home country. They found that the power of the international brand was very important and, although students also identify with the local institution, this was perceived to be less important to the students. Wilkins et al. (2017, 11) argued that their research was important, in particular, because, "organisational identification had stronger, or at least equal effect on student satisfaction than perceived service quality".

Whether reputation, image and branding of HEIs are important for prospective students, once students have graduated, it appears they are less important. The British Council (2012) study argued that TNE students are only mildly influenced by issues of credibility of TNE programmes and once the degree was completed, how it was pursued is almost irrelevant.

Heffernan et al. (2018) looked at educational products branded by both the host and the sending institutions in relation to reputation, trust and student identification and found that students identified with both institutions in the partnership, but in their case more with the sending institution although student identification with the host institution may have an impact on student satisfaction as the students are physically based there for the teaching of the programme. They argued that culture is important for the marketing of the TNE programmes as different cultures may have different

views and understanding about ‘trust’. They concluded that university reputation and student trust were important in predicting student identification with both the host and sending institution, and that the identification with the partner institution was important in predicting student satisfaction and loyalty to both institutions. Maxwell-Stuart and Huisman (2018) found that students often perceived themselves as customers and less as partners and few of the students felt close to their institution, so apathy by students (and staff) often resulted.

Research on reputation, image and branding is still relatively new but is becoming increasingly important in a globalised world where competition amongst HEIs is great with the need to differentiate between competitors ever more important (Kosmutzky and Putty, 2016).

3.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed the effects of globalisation as a context for TNE. Bourdieu’s (1996) theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field are explored as theoretical lenses through which to view this research along with various other cultural frameworks. The role of the family in Malaysia, learning and teaching in a TNE context, the importance of understanding the culture of silence, national culture and TNE as well as what is currently known about the students and culture. Finally, the possible Westernisation and neo-colonisation of TNE and the reputation, image and branding of institutions were examined. From the literature review it is clear that TNE is very complex and diverse with many stakeholders, from both the host and sending countries, all with different, and sometimes, conflicting expectations (Wilkins and Juusola, 2018). TNE highlights the complex relationship between culture and educational practice (Egege and Kutieleh, 2008) and it is this relationship and tension that has been at the heart of this literature review and this research study and why it is important to acknowledge and understand the role of culture in TNE. The research literature on TNE reviewed here acknowledges that culture is important. This is particularly so in trying to better understand TNE and to ensure that it is successful for all involved and to avoid negative outcomes for the host and sending institutions. By understanding these cultural differences, partnerships can be stronger with students likely to have a more positive learning experience (Heffernan et al., 2010). However, there is little evidence from the

research literature on TNE of the full view of the host institutions being considered as part of the TNE debate (MacNamara, 2013). Some authors cited here did consider cross-cultural sensitivities and some did attempt to take into account the host institutions' perspectives but their studies were often viewed through the lens of a Western approach. Galletly and Bao (2015, 9) argued that for TNE, "the cultural differences and educational traditions means that the reality for educators and learners alike may continue to be challenging".

Caruana and Montgomery (2015, 15) found that "the voices of teachers and students remain relatively marginalised and inaudible…." and this appears to be the case from reviewing TNE literature. The TNE student voice is important as it can, in particular, help improve and develop the learning experiences for TNE students (Andrews and Tynan, 2010). Knight and McNamara (2014, 67) argued that, "Given the evolutionary nature of TNE it is critical that the impacts, implications and perhaps unintended consequences of TNE on host counties continue to be closely monitored and analysed".

The research problem that has been identified from this literature review is the relative lack of recognition in the research literature on TNE relating to the student voice and their experiences. This research aims to explore, in-depth, perceptions and experiences of host students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking UK franchise programmes in Malaysia and the value students place on their TNE experiences. This research study will, therefore, investigate cross cultural issues and the Malaysian student voice, as well as looking at these issues through the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's concepts and other cultural concepts. The research questions, in the light of the literature reviewed above, are:

1. What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?
2. Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?
3. What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience?

The next chapter will cover the importance and relevance of educational research and the philosophical approach to this research study. The design and data collection methods chosen to answer the research questions will be explored. The pilot study will be discussed as well as the choice of research instruments and how the data was collected and transcribed. The choice of thematic analysis for the analysis of the research data is discussed in detail. Possible impediments to the research and how they were overcome are considered along with a discussion on how validity for this research study was achieved. Finally, the researcher's reflexive approach to this research, his researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues are considered.

Chapter Four: Methodology

"Nobody owns the entire truth." (Manji, 2019, xii)

4.1 Introduction

This research study provides a valuable insight into the experiences of students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia and why students value studying on a UK franchised programme in that country. This research also provides an insight into what the host and sending institutions can learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience.

This chapter covers the importance and relevance of educational research and the philosophical approach to this research study. The chapter also covers the design and data collection methods chosen to answer the research questions including the reasons behind not using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) programme for this research. The pilot study is discussed as well as the choice of research instruments for the main research phase of the study and how the data was collected and transcribed. The chapter then discusses, in detail, the choice of thematic analysis for the analysis of the research data, explaining the phases of the data analysis, modelling the approach on the guiding principles and checklist set out by Braun and Clark (2006). Possible impediments to the research and how they were overcome are outlined. Research quality is then discussed, setting out how validity was ensured for this research study. Finally, my reflexive approach to this research, my researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues are considered in detail.

4.2 Educational research and this research study

It is important to understand the relevance of educational research to my research questions before moving on to explore, in detail, some of the main philosophical assumptions that underpin it.

Educational research is concerned with exploring, understanding, describing and explaining social phenomena and there are research studies when it is reasonable to concentrate on any one or all of these areas (Robson, 2011; Dash, 2005). Educational research can be used to explore issues, to shape policy or improve practice (Newby, 2014). It has systematic inquiry and attitude as its two main focuses, so it is both a distinctive way of thinking about educational issues and also of investigating them (Morrison, 2007). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, 5) discussed systematic inquiry in educational research but they also said it is, "…characterised by sets of principles, guidelines for procedures and which is subject to evaluation in terms of criteria such as validity, reliability and representativeness". Bassey (1999) stressed that educational research is also about informing educational judgements in order to improve education. Improvements can be achieved by reflective and critical thinking and a more informed view which can then improve professional practice (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Educational research is, therefore, about systematic inquiry that needs to be valid, reliable and representative and, if possible, that some form of action should follow at the end of the research improving professional practice. This view of educational research fits very well with my own research proposals leading to improving the professional practice and the TNE student educational journey.

Theory is an important part of educational research where the epistemological and ontological positions are sometimes made explicit or sometimes not (Wright, 2008). Epistemology is a theory of how things can be known (Robson, 2011) and is a philosophical assumption about the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon being researched – they are not independent but interrelated (Creswell, 2007). Ontology is a theory about the type of fundamental entities that exist (Robson, 2011) and is another philosophical assumption about the nature of reality (Creswell, 2007). When something is constructed in the minds of the participants in the research process, then it is real (Guba and Lincoln, 1998), and so reality is in the minds of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Wright (2008, 2) has argued, "We cannot do research without theory; theory shapes how we identify a research problem and then how we frame the research that will address it".

4.3 The philosophical approach of this research study

An interpretivist philosophical approach was followed for this research study in order to allow for the complexity of the student and staff perceptions and views to be fully explored. Interpretivism is, according to Bryman (2016, 692), "an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grab the subjective meaning of social action". I wished to explore the underlying social processes and values of the students (Frogatt, 2001) in a Malaysian context. As well as exploring the student experiences and perceptions (Questions 1 and 2) it was important to explore the views of staff at both the host and sending institutions (Question 3). This enabled lessons to be learnt from the students' perceptions, in order to help deliver a high-quality student experience.

Interpretivism has been very influential in educational research (Garrick, 1999) and relates to a number of philosophical traditions (Morrison, 2005). As Radnor (2002, 4) stated, "Different interpretive researchers would prioritise different scholars and thinkers in providing an explanation of interpretivism". Interpretivism is sometimes known as the naturalistic approach (Dash, 2005), that is, phenomena are researched in their natural settings using a qualitative approach (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Interpretivism has a number of branches with overlapping boundaries and can have a number of meanings amongst researchers. Some researchers regard interpretivism as an overarching term for all qualitative research whilst others regard it as a particular group of philosophies which covers many variations of approach to social enquiry (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013; Grix, 2010).

Radnor (2002, 4) suggested that:

> "The interpretive approach rests on the premise that in social life there is only interpretation. Everyday life revolves around persons interpreting and making decisions about how to act based on their own experiences and their interpretation of the experience and behaviours of others".

Interpretivism, therefore, emphasises the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by human beings in social situations. Interpretivists think that the real world of the individual person, their subjective experience, is very important and their core task is, "to view research participants as research subjects and to explore

the meanings of events and phenomena from the subjects' perspectives" (Morrison, 2007, 18). This means doing research with people rather than on people (Garrick, 1999) which I endeavoured to do in my research. Interpretivists believe in the uniqueness of human inquiry and to understand human action by means of interpretation (Radnor, 2002). For the interpretivist, there cannot be an objective reality (Morrison, 2007). Objective reality is where, "social phenomena have an existence that is independent of social actors" (Bryman, 2016, 693), whereas for the interpretivist, it cannot be independent of the social actors.

Interpretivism has a relativist ontology. The ontological assumptions are that reality is always changing; there is a dynamic order in which much cannot be exactly known or determined, and the relations between things are at least as important as the things themselves (Jackson, 2015). Mack (2010) asserted that reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective. For instance, people interpret and make their own meaning of events, events are distinctive and cannot be generalised, and there are many perspectives on one incident. The ontological assumptions associated with interpretivism are what guided the choice of a qualitative approach for this study and particularly what value students place on their choice of degree programme.

The epistemological assumptions underpinning interpretivism are transactional and subjectivist (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Knowledge is gained, for instance, by respecting the differences between people and through personal experience and it cannot be reduced to simplistic interpretation (Mack, 2010). The epistemological assumptions associated with interpretivism are what guided the choice of qualitative approach for this study.

A number of criticisms and limitations can be levelled at interpretivism although they are open to question depending on what assumptions are made. For instance, Hammersley (2012) outlined a number of criticisms of the interpretive approach that have been made such as it is too vague or too variable, failing to provide for broader conclusions. The results from an interpretivist approach cannot be generalised and it does not aim to change and challenge social phenomena (Mack 2010). However, despite these criticisms, interpretivism, and this qualitative

approach, has much value in answering my research questions. It is concerned with the individual and attempts to understand the subjective world of human experience by trying to get inside the person and to understand from within but will not lead to generalisations (Cohen et al., 2018).

Creswell (1998, 13) pointed out that, "…qualitative research is an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colours, different textures, and various blends of material. The fabric is not explained easily or simply". This is particularly relevant in dealing with the perspectives the Malaysian students and staff shared with me in this research. The choice of a qualitative approach, therefore, lends itself to a flexible approach through group and individual interviews of students and staff to describe and interpret sensitive and sometimes intangible outcomes in a cross-cultural setting which is the key to answering my research questions. The personal histories, experiences, feelings, perspectives and the social world views of the students and staff involved in this research will enable the research questions to be best answered through this interpretive approach. The approach will be enhanced by the richness, complexity and detail of the interactions and conversations and allowing for unexpected insights to be studied further (Saldana, 2011).

4.4 The pilot study

The pilot study was important in allowing the testing of my research questions and getting to know the field of my study much better before the main research phase began. This was particularly important when a researcher, as in my case, is working in different cultural contexts (Gudmundsdottir and Brock-Utne, 2010). I was able to develop my interviewing skills and focus group moderation skills and reflect on them to try to overcome common pitfalls such as loaded or overtly directive questions. I was able to practice how to ask questions, put students at their ease, stress confidentiality and anonymity and make sure quiet students had space and confidence to speak and express their views, all within an inter-cultural setting. From this perspective, I was able to increase my self-confidence in running a focus group and to employ strategies in achieving rigor in this qualitative research. After the focus group, I was also able to practice transcribing interview data and think about how I would manage and analyse the data for the main research phase.

The focus group was held at my own university in the UK with host college students from Malaysia who were completing their final year in the UK after two years on the franchise programme. The choice of these students in the UK and not Malaysia was done for logistical and accessibility reasons. However, only two students attended, although over twenty students were invited to take part in my research (allowing for some to drop out). At the start of the focus group, I used a student interview aide memoire with an introduction to explain the process and thanked the students for their time and I stressed anonymity and confidentiality throughout. The focus group lasted for about one hour and was audio recorded with the written permission of the students. The pilot study gave me a chance to become familiar with the recording equipment which I had not used before. Two audio recorders were used for my reassurance in case there were technical difficulties. Their position in the room, so as to be as unobtrusive as possible, was important so as not to cause anxiety or stage fright for the students (Morse et al, 2002).

My research assistant also took notes and recorded any significant non-verbal actions and messages of the participants and to capture supplementary information of not just what was said but how it was said (Bryman, 2016). For instance, facial expression, posture and eye contact (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013) were noted. The taking of notes by my research assistant was also very important, not only if there were technical difficulties with the audio equipment, but because it can be very difficult for the interviewer to concentrate on asking questions and take notes at the same time (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003).

A number of issues arose as part of the pilot study that were worthy to note and for me to reflect and act on. First, only two students attended the focus group which meant the interaction required of a focus group was missing. However, there were still important issues raised but it did concentrate my mind to ensure that enough students took part in the main study. The second issue was that the students wanted to talk for part of the focus group about their experiences whilst studying in the UK. Whilst interesting, this was not the focus of my research and, therefore, I resolved to conduct the focus groups of the main study in Malaysia to avoid this issue. The third issue was that the students were concerned that their views should not get back

to their college in Malaysia (nor the UK Business School). In particular, they did not want to be seen as critical of their college and lecturers, not necessarily because of any ramifications for themselves, but more because they did not wish to appear disloyal. In any case, confidentially and anonymity were stressed by myself at the start of the interview and at the end and I made sure I stressed this in future student focus groups. The fourth issue concerned the amount of time allowed for transcribing the audio recording. It was hoped that this would be done within 72 hours but this proved difficult and this informed my work plan for the main research phase which allowed a greater amount of time for transcription. I felt it important to transcribe the recording myself to allow me to immerse myself fully in the data (Rose and Webb, 1998). Transcription took me over 10 hours, whilst normally more experienced researchers would have taken 5-6 hours per hour interview (Bryman, 2016).

With just two students in one focus group, it was not possible to draw any firm conclusions from the data collected. It was interesting to note that both students saw significant differences between the teaching styles, support given and the emphasis on critical thinking between their experiences in Malaysia and in the UK. They knew lecturing staff very well in Malaysia due to the fact that they are taught in small classes and that they had been at their colleges some years, including pre-HE studies. They said it was much easier to get academic support in Malaysia although support was available in the UK. A key outcome for the students, however, was on the emphasis on critical thinking in the UK, as opposed to the college in Malaysia. They said it took them much longer to acquire these skills for study in the UK, albeit they were on the same programme in Malaysia. The students also talked about how important family and friends were in choosing what and where to study. Although the research instrument of a focus group worked well (but with only two students) I was able to reflect on and then revise the questions for the students in the main research phase to much better focus on my research questions.

A further issue I needed to reflect on was how to deal with the blurring of boundaries between being a researcher in my own field and being a practitioner at my University. I found it difficult, at first, not to deal with issues of concern raised by students, trying to resolve them as I would as part of my management role. It

became clear that my approach must be as independent researcher as far as the students were concerned. It also confirmed that the research process does not always go smoothly and that sometimes a different or alternative approach may be needed. I subsequently arranged student focus groups in Malaysia when I visited the private college for work purposes. I continued to keep a research diary and tried to ensure that interviewer bias and prejudice were mitigated as far as possible to maintain rigor in the research process. This has proved, on occasions, to be challenging for me as a researcher and practitioner and as an insider/outsider. However, as Jootun (2009, 45) stated, "Qualitative studies are prone to a degree of subjectivity because interpretation of the participant's behaviour and collected data is influenced by the values, beliefs, experience and interest of the researcher" and so this will always be an issue to deal with and reflect on.

The key aim of this research was to understand the complexity and richness of students' experiences and it was now clearer, after the pilot study, that the decision to use focus groups as one of my research instruments in answering my research questions was the right one.

4.5 The research design and data collection of the main research phase

4.5.1 The research instruments

The research instruments involved in my study were student focus groups and individual staff interviews which are two of the most useful ways of gathering qualitative data (Maykut and Morehouse, 1999). Jacob and Furgerson (2012, 1) asserted that, "researchers may use many different techniques, but at the heart of qualitative research is the desire to expose the human part of the story" which is essential in answering my research questions. To gain answers to my research questions I required a rich source of data which Sandelowski (1993, 1) called "Landscapes of human experiences". Rich descriptions of the social world are important (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013) and the personal histories and worldviews (Saldana, 2011) of the students and staff would, therefore, be best sought by focus groups and interviews in order to answer my research questions. It is by these methods that the in-depth feelings, opinions, experiences and perspectives of student and staff as well as their perceptions, values and beliefs of the world they inhabit, their real world, could best generate the insights that were required to

answer my questions, and which also generated unexpected issues that required further research (Braun and Clark, 2014; Saldana, 2011).

4.5.1.1 Student focus groups

Focus groups are a way of collecting qualitative data from a small number of people in interactive group discussions (Onwuegbuzie et al, 2009; Barbour, 2005; Kruger and Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1996). It is this interaction that makes the data different from other research instruments (Bloor et al, 2001) and particularly relevant to help answer my research questions with the students. Focus groups were useful in my research in eliciting student views (Barbour, 2005) and gaining insights into their behaviours by what they said, they did and thought about their experiences (Carey and Smith, 1994). The focus groups also allowed the more reticent Malaysian students a chance to voice their views in a safe group environment. This is further discussed below. The subsequent information from the focus groups helped me to understand the 'why' behind the student behaviour and so the focus groups encouraged the students to interact with each other enhancing the discussions (Greenbaum, 2000). As Carey and Smith (1994, 124) pointed out, focus group members can, "describe the rich details of complex experiences and the reasoning behind their actions, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes". The focus groups in my research, therefore, uncovered not only what students thought but more importantly why they thought that way (Morgan, 1988).

Interestingly, the use of focus groups in TNE research appears to be limited. For instance, Waterval et al. (2015) found in their narrative literature review of thirty-nine articles on TNE partnerships, that these studies used a qualitative approach using document analysis, interviews, questionnaires, literature reviews, and observations but only two studies used focus groups.

In my research study, interaction in the focus groups was most effective when the students talked, discussed and cooperated with each other which gave very useful information to answer the research questions (Creswell, 1998). The students in each focus group were from one year only of a franchise programme with the sending UK university which helped their discussions and cooperation, with most students not knowing each other. In addition, the focus groups were helpful because my time

to collect information in Malaysia was limited. The student focus groups also proved useful as I thought that students interviewed one to one may be hesitant to provide information (Creswell, 1998) and focus groups also allowed the students to take more responsibility for expressing their views and drawing out the views of others in the group (Gall et al., 2007). In addition, focus groups are a useful method in trying to find out and fully understand any differences between groups of people (Krueger and Casey, 2000). In the case of this study, any differences in views, opinions, behaviours and motivations between first year, second year and final year students on their educational journey would be elicited. Focus groups can also be less threatening and can allow a greater discussion about thoughts, opinions and perceptions of the participants in a safe environment (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). As a result, Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003, 92) stated that, "discussion will be richer, deeper, more honest and incisive than any interview with a single participation could have". This proved to be the case with the students happily contributing to the discussions in the focus groups for my research.

A topic guide was used (see Appendix 2) in each focus group to help aid the discussion and to help comparability between focus groups but not to restrict student discussion (Bryman, 2016). After each focus group, I reflected on and reviewed what had been said and if new issues had been raised by students not on my guide, I included it on the topic guide for the next focus groups so other students could discuss and comment on it.

However, not everyone may speak in a focus group and silence from one or more participants may not necessarily mean consensus but may mean an unwillingness to express their disagreement (Robson, 2011). From my own experiences over many years meeting and working with Malaysian students and staff in Malaysia, cultural issues such as saving face and being very polite at the expense of saying what they feel, can play a significant part. Care was, therefore, taken by me with the groups of Malaysian students, who can be quiet and sometimes less willing to express their views for fear of letting their friends, lecturers or college down. I, therefore, ensured that the students felt in a safe environment and I stressed confidentiality and anonymity so that they could express their views knowing that my research was to enhance their learning environment and not to be used in any

negative way. I built up trust with the students so that all could speak and contribute in the discussions which worked reasonably well for all of the focus groups.

There were a number of other challenges with using focus groups and as Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003, 108) stated, “Ironically, the greatest strength of focus groups – their group dynamic and interactions – can also be the source of their greatest weakness”. It could be that participants try to please others and not give their real views. They may also not move far from the group view because of not wanting to feel out on a limb, and the group may have a dominant member who speaks the most and may overshadow others who have something to say but feel they cannot speak. My presence could also have biased the responses with the students feeling overawed by a senior academic from the UK, or them not wanting to say what they thought but what they thought I wanted to hear (Creswell, 1998). However, as stated above, by building confidence with the students and stressing confidentiality and anonymity the challenges outlined above were overcome as much as possible.

Conversely, focus groups can be a relatively inexpensive and economical way to elicit views, can provide data rich discussions and can be flexible to run. They can also provide a natural, relaxed and secure setting for participants to speak and share views (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003); they can be fast, efficient and give a sense of belonging to the group helping participants to feel safe and share their views (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). However, Barbour (2005) held a different view and asserted, “One of the most common myths surrounding the use of focus groups is that they allow for research to be carried out more quickly and cheaply than other methods”.

I took great care as the moderator of the focus groups to allow full discussion in a friendly and supportive way, ensuring all could have time to speak and air their views, and this worked well for all of the student focus groups. In moderating the focus groups, I initially made minor mistakes in how to handle the groups, such as trying to resolve student issues in the pilot study, as I would have done as part of my university role, but I got better over time – a learning process that I reflected on in my journal.

Finally, student focus groups were chosen because individual student interviews would have been very difficult for me to carry out in Malaysia if I wanted to capture as many students as I eventually did in the focus groups. Arranging 30-40+ individual student interviews, face to face would have been logistically and practically impossible and may not have necessarily provided different data.

4.5.1.2 Sample size of the focus groups

Researchers have different views as to the appropriate size of focus groups in order to enable effective group discussion (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Small focus groups can be helpful in promoting participants to share a range of opinions but may reduce the possibility of encouraging challenging conversations that can arise if more are involved (Greenbaum, 2000; Kruger and Casey, 2000). To give the Malaysian students time to share their experiences and views, I therefore chose smaller focus group sizes. The number of focus groups to run depends on how many participants are possible and what variations exist in the target population (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Kreuger and Casey (2006) suggested three to four focus groups for each type of participant with more being necessary if saturation has not been reached. Saturation is when the researcher is not seeing or hearing new information or fresh insights from new data after analysis. Diminishing returns have, therefore, been reached and so no further data needs to be gathered (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013; Silverman, 2011; Robson, 2011). This is confirmed by Charmaz (2006, 113) when she stated, "Categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories".

4.5.1.3 Composition of the focus groups

The composition of each focus group in my research was characterised by homogeneity (Kreuger and Casey, 2000); that is to say, each group contained only one level of students (1st, 2nd or final year students). My plan was to have seven groups in total, including the pilot study. These consisted of six focus groups of 5-7 students each covering equally years 1, 2 and 3 of undergraduate franchise programmes as well as the pilot focus group covering year 3 students. Allowing for any drop-outs in the focus groups, this amounted to a total of 34 students. For most projects, 4–6 focus groups are often a good rule of thumb because the data becomes

saturated after the first few groups (Mason, 2010; Guest et al., 2006; Morgan, 1996). Fern (1982) estimated that two focus groups would produce as many ideas as 10 individual interviews, so this was a relatively efficient but appropriate way of answering the first two research questions relating to the perceived benefits and challenges of their TNE journey on a franchise programme and the value they placed on it. The use of focus groups also provided useful information on, amongst other things, why students chose a franchise degree rather than study abroad, the value they place on an intercultural and international education and what they perceive to have gained from it, and their sense of belonging and identity they have for their Malaysian college and UK university.

Basic demographic details of the students who took part in the six focus groups were taken and can be seen in Table 4.1. All students were full-time and studying on a business franchise programme at the host institution, validated by the sending institution. Most students were Malaysian but three of the 34 students in this study were international students (i.e. non-Malaysian students from abroad). All were in the age range of between 19-26 with a near equal balance of males and females.

Table 4.1 Students' demographic information

Gender	**Age range (mean)**	**Year of study**	**Country of origin**
Females = 18 Males = 16	19 - 26	Year 1 = 12	11 Malaysian + 1 overseas
	(N = 21.4)	Year 2 = 10	8 Malaysian + 2 overseas
		Year 3 = 10 (plus 2 in the pilot)	12 Malaysian
		Total = 34 (including the pilot)	

The focus groups took place from March 2016 to July 2017 in Malaysia at the host institution (apart from the pilot focus group, that took place at the sending institution). Each student and staff member have specific identifier letters and numbers. For example, Focus Group 1 is FG1 with a letter denoting which student said what e.g. FG1B (Focus Group 1, Student B). Details can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Student focus group details

Focus Group	Date of focus group	Year of programme	Location
P (Pilot)	March 2016	Final Year	UK
FG1	Oct 2016	1st year	Malaysia
FG2	Oct 2016	2nd year	Malaysia
FG3	Oct 2016	Final year	Malaysia
FG4	July 2017	1st year	Malaysia
FG5	July 2017	2nd year	Malaysia
FG6	July 2017	Final year	Malaysia

4.5.1.4 Recruitment of the focus groups

Recruitment involved purposive sampling with the students being invited to attend specific focus groups either in October 2016 or July 2017 on one of my planned work visits to Malaysia. The whole cohort of students studying business degrees on franchised programmes of the UK university were initially contacted by the private college through their e-mail accounts to see if they would like to take part in the research. Once students had agreed to take part and they were willing and available at the specified dates/times, I then contacted them to give them more details about the research and their possible part in it. I sent then a Participant Information Sheet (See Appendix 3) explaining the research and a consent form (See Appendix 4). The students who eventually took part, and some did drop out before the start of the focus groups, did not know each other personally. The focus groups lasted between 60 - 90 minutes each.

4.5.1.5 Individual academic staff interviews

Interviews are widely used and common instruments in qualitative research (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013; Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003) and can give the researcher a rich insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Individual interviews are flexible and adaptable (Robson, 2011) and the researcher can follow up questions and clarify answers with the interviewees. They can also elicit information about lived experiences and the interviewee's perspectives on their life stories (Jacob and Furgerson, 2012). Interviews can build trust and rapport with interviewees, which may reveal information that might not be forthcoming from other methods such as questionnaires (Gall et al., 2007).

Conversely, carrying out individual interviews can be expensive in terms of time, can be inconvenient for interviewees and anonymity may be difficult to guarantee completely (Cohen et al, 2018). Interviews are also dependent on the honesty of the participants and sometimes participants provide information they think the researcher wants to hear rather than what might be what they consider to be the real answer (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013). This is particularly possible with this research as college participants are Malaysian and they could have given answers that did not necessarily reflect their own true views because of their cultural background. Cultural issues may also involve participants not wanting to talk openly about themselves or participants may be reluctant to criticise authority (Dimmock, 2005). These issues were lessened, however, as I tried to achieve a supportive non-confrontational and confidential environment, particularly by the way I asked my questions. The cultural aspects and diversity of Malaysian society and the culture of interviewing in Malaysia were important. Razak (2005) cited in Robinson-Plant (2005, 87) asserted that, "the success of any interview (*does*) not rely on the types of questions or the quantity of information or data collected, but rather on the depth of understanding of the cultural context and the locality".

4.5.1.6 Composition and recruitment of the individual interviews

Staff were chosen because of the roles they held at the host and sending institutions. It was felt important to have a senior manager at each institution who had a more strategic role including resource allocation, a more operational senior manager at

both institutions and then an operational member of staff who dealt with students on a day to day basis. It was also felt that 6 interviews covering this range of staff at each institution would be enough to help give valuable insights into what the host and sending institutions can learn from the student experiences gained from the focus groups. This proved to be the case. I wrote to each chosen member of staff to explain the research and their part in it. I sent then a Participant Information Sheet (See Appendix 5) explaining the research and a consent form (See Appendix 4). All staff contacted agreed to take part. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to use the limited time to best effect and keep the interaction focussed (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013). I had prepared a topic guide (see Appendix 6) to collect similar information from each participant (Doody and Noonan, 2013) but the interviews were flexible depending on how the questions were answered and additional broad questions were added to the guide as issues arose from the earlier interviews (Bryman, 2016). It was important for me to keep a reflective journal as part of my research study and I was able to think and reflect after each interview and to develop my interviewing skills. I discuss this further below. Each interview lasted between 45 – 60 minutes. Interviews with the sending institution were held face to face in the UK whilst the host institution interviews were held via Skype This on-line approach has growing international recognition, is accessible across the world as a viable research medium (Deakin, 2014; Hanna, 2012) and is regularly used by staff at the host college and the sending institution for meetings. Although the face-to-face interviews are seen by some to be a high standard, they can also cause problems due to time constraints, logistics and finance (Deakin, 2014).

The use of Skype was necessary as it was not possible to visit Malaysia to carry out the interviews at the time the data collection was required. However, this posed no problems, technical or otherwise, and I was able to have synchronous interaction between myself and the interviewees (Hanna, 2012) once the time difference was taken into account (see Appendix 7).

The six staff were chosen from the host and sending institutions because of the role they play at each institution as far as TNE is concerned (See section 4.5.1.6, page

79 as to why they were chosen). Table 4.3 shows these details. Each academic staff member is identified by an H (Host) or S (Sending) and a number.

Table 4.3 Academic staff at each institution taking part in their individual interview

Host Institution (H)	Date of interview	Location	Sending Institution (S)	Date of interview	Location
A Dean (H1)	February 2018	Video conference	An Associate Dean (S1)	December 2017	UK
An Academic Director (H2)	February 2018	Video conference	A Head of Department (S2)	December 2017	UK
A Head of Programme (H3)	February 2018	Video conference	A Link Tutor (S3)	January 2018	UK

4.6 My choice of manual handling for data management

I felt it was very important for me to not only transcribe the data by myself, but to learn to code and practise analysing the data myself by hand in the first instance for this research, to better grasp the logic underpinning this method (Newby, 2014). By doing so, I would, therefore, fully immerse myself in the data in order to better understand the processes involved and to avoid, as a less experienced researcher, any alienation from the data.

For researchers interested in evaluating, interpreting and explaining social phenomena by analysing semi-structured data such as focus groups and interviews, Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) programmes can be beneficial tools. Basit (2003, 143) argued that:

> "The analysis of qualitative data is usually seen as arduous. The reason why it is found to be difficult is that it is not fundamentally a mechanical or technical exercise. It is a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing".

Advantages of using CAQDAS, according to St. John and Johnson (2000, 394) included:

> "an ability to deal with large amounts of qualitative data, reducing the amount of time needed for manual handling tasks, increased flexibility and thoroughness in handling data, providing for more rigorous analysis of data, and providing a more visible audit trail in data analysis".

At the start of this research project, I therefore investigated whether to use CAQDAS programmes, such as NVivo, in my research. NVivo is one of the best known packages to help with the process of data retrieval, management and analysis. I knew that there had been much debate by researchers over the advantages and disadvantages in the use of CAQDAS software in qualitative research (e.g. they can store, code and retrieve data in an efficient way; but it can take time learn how to use the programme) and this is discussed in detail below. To try to better understand the use of CAQDAS software, I attended a one day course at my university on how to use NVivo using data collected from my pilot study. In my decision making process as whether to use CAQDAS I was acutely aware of the amount of data that would be generated from my research study and the time it was going to take me to manage and process this data. It was possible to get drowned in data from so many different sources (Savin–Badin and Howell Major, 2013) and so I was keenly conscious of the sheer quantity of data and the importance of not being overwhelmed by it (Eno and Kyngas, 2007). The advantage of using CAQDAS is that they can store, code and retrieve data in an efficient way (Denscombe, 2014). However, Richards (2015, 126) pointed out the commonly raised challenge of, "a tension between efficiency and creativity" when decisions as to using computers in this regard is raised. Some researchers feel creativity can be lost when using CAQDAS, although conversely, time can be saved making it a much more effective process. Cohen (2018, 544) argued that:

> "These programmes have the attraction of coping with large quantities of material rapidly and without any risk of human error in computation and retrieval, and releasing researchers from some mechanical tasks".

However, there are limitations as well as advantages of using CAQDAS, such as the time taken to learn how to use the programme and the possible alienation of the researcher from the data, thereby eliminating any personal experience of the process (Creswell, 2007). Denscombe (2014, 281) concurred with this view about the start-up time required and asserted that, "For the first-time user, there is the time taken

in getting to know the package and understand its potential. There is also the time taken to input the data". Bonner and Albarran (2009, 26) also acknowledged there are limitations by stating:

> "A number of critics remain sceptical. Concerns are most often related to philosophical considerations, relationship of CAQDAS and research methodologies, and researcher distraction".

Although, as stated before, I attended a course on how to use NVivo, as a relatively new and less experienced researcher at the start of the research study, I felt, after much consideration and reflection, that it was essential that I gain more experience of processing and managing the data by hand (Newby, 2014). I realised that I would have to devote a substantial amount of time in becoming familiar with, how to use and master, CAQDAS if used. This time, I concluded, would be better spent on understanding and becoming even more engaged with my data rather than the possibility of distancing myself from it, a disadvantage of CAQDAS put forward by some researchers (Bergin, 2011). St. John and Jonson (2000, 396) also asserted that:

> "Many find that far from being a time saver, CAQDAS may be a time waster. Entry, coding, and management of data using a computer can be time consuming. A researcher many need to invest much time learning to use a computer package, invariably encountering computer-induced emotional and time-wasting traumas along the way.". (396).

It also needed to be acknowledged that using CAQDAS does not do the analysis for the researcher (Denscombe, 2014; Guest et al., 2012). In the light of these reflections (See Appendix 7), accepting that there are benefits as well as limitations to using CAQDAS, I therefore, chose manual handling for this research project.

4.7 Transcription

The data analysis was best supported by transcription of the focus groups and interviews and notes taken at the time (McLellan et al., 2003; Bloor et al., 2001). Transcription is a central part of the qualitative research process but it is often an overlooked part (Davidson, 2009). The audio recordings were transcribed as a word document using a standardised transcription and data preparation protocol based generally on McLellan et al., (2003) who advised, inter alia, on labelling of

transcripts, ending interviews, transcribing verbatim and how this should be done, reviewing for accuracy, storage of the recordings and their ultimate destruction. I transcribed the recordings myself which allowed me to compare and annotate them all and immerse myself fully in the data (Rose and Webb, 1998). Saldana (2011, 41) confirmed the approach I have taken when he stated that, "By transcribing the interviews yourself (*it*) provides you with cognitive ownership and potentially strong insights about your data", although the time element to do this was significant (Bryman, 2016). I also used notes from each focus group that had been taken by my research assistant and we were able to have a debriefing immediately after each focus group. This helped, as Carey and Smith (1994, 126) observed, "to capture the richness of data which a transcript cannot convey (tone, pace, inflection, nonverbal communication) and subsequent meaning (satire, humour, emotion, intensity)". As Cameron (2001, 43) argued, "[*transcription*] is the part of the process in which the analyst's engagement with the details of the talk is most intense, as s/he works at hearing them accurately and experiments with different ways of representing them.".

The transcription of focus groups is more complex than the transcription of individual interviews because of the number of people involved (Bloor et al., 2001). Transcription was not just a straightforward and simple task because I had to make choices concerning the level of detail to be included (Lichtman, 2013). There is no such thing as a perfect transcript of a voice recording, but rather it depends on what the researcher is attempting to achieve in the analysis, as well as more practical considerations such as time and resources (Bloor et al., 2001). Richards (2015) stated that a thick description is useful as it contains details of recall and imagery, observing features and nuances such as hesitation or laughter, which may give richer meanings to understanding the data. However, as Davidson (2009, 38) asserted, "Transcription entails a translation" in so far as choices are made in selecting certain phenomena or features of talk and interaction as it is impossible to record all features of talk and interaction from transcripts. Davidson (2009, 38) also argued that, "Selectivity needs to be acknowledged and explained in relation to the goals of the study rather than taken to be unremarkable". It was clear from my experiences that, "There is no standard way to transcribe talk…not a one size fits all" (Cameron, 2001, 43).

The transcripts at the end provided data of over 85,000 words for the focus groups and interviews from a total of nearly 16 hours of recordings.

4.8 Data analysis

4.8.1 Thematic analysis of the focus groups and interviews

Although there is much literature on how to run and manage a focus group, there is much less on how to analyse and interpret the special nature of focus group data and the dynamic interaction among the members of the group (Guest et al., 2012; Wilkinson, 2011; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Carey and Smith, 1994). My chosen strategy for analysing the focus group and individual interview data was by thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can provide a rich, detailed and complex set of outcomes from the data, and as Joffe (2012, 2014) stated, "verbal interviews or focus group data tend to be at the root of thematic research" and so this method fitted well with the epistemology, ontology and methodology of my research. Thematic analysis is a useful method for applied research, such as my study, and can be helpful in informing both policy and practice (Braun and Clark, 2013; Ward et al., 2013).

Thematic analysis is a relatively popular and flexible approach, with a theoretical freedom and extensively used data analysis method but it does not have common or identifiable heritage and history nor is there universal agreement about how it should be done (Bryman, 2016; Braun and Clark, 2013; Joffe, 2012; Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, thematic analysis is not without criticisms which include a lack of general agreement on what it is and how to do it. As Braun and Clarke (2006, 77) stated, "Thematic analysis is a poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative, analytic method". To ensure a consistent and auditable approach, I therefore modelled my approach on the guiding principles and checklist set out by Braun and Clark (2006) as shown in Table 4.1 and generally followed their phases as described below. These guiding principles of Braun and Clark (2006) are accepted by many researchers, as judged by the number of citations of their work, to be a useful way of conducting thematic analysis. However, my thematic analysis approach was also informed from insights from other authors who are referred to, as appropriate, below.

Table 4.4 Phases of thematic analysis informing the research study

	Phases	Description of Analysis Process
1	Familiarising myself with the data	• Preparation of data i.e. transcribing the data • (Re) reading the data and noting down intial ideas
2	Generating initial codes	• Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the whole of the data set • Collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for themes	• Collating codes into potential themes • Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	• Checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts • Checking if themes work in relation to the entire data set • Reviewing data to search for additional themes • Generating a thematic "map" of the analysis
5	Defining and naming themes	• On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells • Generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report	• Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples • Final analysis of selected extracts • Relating the analysis back to the research question, objective and previous literature reviewed

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and Clarke and Braun (2013)

Thematic analysis is not a linear process (Braun and Clark, 2006), but more interrelated, interactive and iterative in practice (Creswell, 2009), a way of seeing patterns in the data (Guest et al., 2012). Strauss and Corbin (1998, 30) summed up this process by stating that, " In many ways, research may be conceived as a circular process, one that involves a lot of going back and forth and around before finally realising one's goal". A 'theme', according to Saldana (2009, 139), is, "a phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and what it means". There are a lack of clearly specified series of procedures for how to conduct a thematic analysis

but there is a growing body of researchers that believe there is a core to the process (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). However, there is also a criticism of thematic analysis in that researchers can be relatively vague about how themes from their research have emerged and developed (Bazely, 2013). It was important, therefore, for me to justify the decisions as to why the themes that emerged were important, significant, related to each other, and linked to the relevant literature (Bazely, 2013). It was also necessary for me to outline how the analysis was carried out to ensure there was a clearly defined audit trail (Braun and Clark, 2006; Bazely, 2013) as well as transparency to allow others to see how the study's findings were derived and the choices made by myself (Ward et al., 2013).

My approach was inductive in so far as the codes and resultant themes were data driven, that is, developed on the basis of reading the data as opposed to being derived from prior theory or research. All basic codes were generated through conceptualising the data, not generated beforehand, allowing themes to emerge from the data itself as an inductive process (Braun and Clark, 2013; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). This was an active process of constructing the themes rather than the themes being hidden in the data. However, this inductive process also had some deduction, in so far as it is also an iterative process of going back and forwards between the data and theory (Bryman 2016). Bryman (2016, 24) helpfully explained this by stating, "Deductive and inductive strategies are possibly better thought of as tendencies rather than as separated by a hard-and-fast distinction".

I acknowledged the view of Dey (1993, 110/111) that, "There are as many ways of seeing the data as one can invent". However, during the search for codes and themes, I based this search on those 'scrutinity techniques' that Ryan and Bernard (2003) have suggested are suitable to be applied to rich narrative data such as in my research. These included looking for:

a. repetitions (i.e. things that were talked about a lot);
b. indigenous typologies and categories (i.e. the way things were discussed);
c. metaphors and analogies (i.e. things that may tell the researcher what is going on);
d. transitions (i..e from one thing to another, pauses, changes of tone or topic);
e. similarities and differences (.ie. consistency or comparisons); and

f. missing data (i.e. that what I might have reasonably expected to be there but was not).

I also used questions to ask of my data suggested by Charmaz (2006, 94-95). For instance:

> "What is going on? What are people saying? What are people doing? What do these actions and statements take for granted? How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and staements?".

I also viewed a theme, "as characterised by its significance" to the research questions (Maguire and Delahunt, B, 2017, 3356). Finally, I gave more emphasis to spontaneous expressions rather than more prompted ones when they occurred, "as they are inferred to hold more cognitive salience for the speaker" (Guest et al., 2012, 122). These spontaneous expressions were differentiated and highlighted in the transcriptions of the focus groups and interviews and also in the code books (see Appendix 8).

This transparency, and the choices I made, were also informed by me keeping a research journal so I could explain and reflect on what choices I had made and by way of my thought processes as they developed. As Ward et al. (2013, 2425) stated, "Keeping a reflexive journal improves rigor by ensuring that procedures during the study and emerging ideas are recorded from the recruitment of participants to the development of themes". Examples of my reflections from my research journal are shown at Appendix 7.

4.8.1.1 Phase 1 Familiarisation with the data

Transcribing is the first stage of analysis and interpretation (Cameron, 2001). As discussed above, I therefore transcribed the data myself to ensure I became intimately familiar with it from the start and could immerse myself in it. Listening to the audio recordings again and again and reading through the transcripts several times, once completed, was very time consuming (Groenewald, 2004) but after repeated reading of the transcripts, I was able to start looking for meanings and patterns at this early stage and to, as Ward et al. (2013, 2426) stated, "gain a sense

of whole interviews prior to dividing them into sections and identifying recurring themes". I also heard again the voices of the students in the focus groups and was able to notice 'unremembered' details such as who said what and in what tone (Richards, 2015). At this stage, I also used the notes that had been taken during the focus groups by my research assistant to enrich and enhance the data collected by the audio recorder (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003) and to help take into account the context of each focus group and the students' actions and mannerisms to inform my overall thoughts, but at the same time trying to be careful to avoid making assumptions about any interpretations, although this is unavoidable to some extent.

I started making notes and thinking about ideas for the next stages as the development of coding continued throughout the whole process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As part of this note taking, I used 'Word Mark Up' to make comments and initial codes on the transcripts and then was able to collate all these initial comments and thoughts for each transcript to help me start thinking about what had been said. Table 4.5 shows an example of this process linking it to student statements to keep the context.

Table 4.5 Examples of initial thoughts, ideas and researcher comments from Phase 1 of the thematic analysis

Data extract	Initial researcher comment
Student FG4B: "My father think that, he always says that the world is very big and is very different in each country so it is very important for us to go out and look and go abroad".	Importance of global awareness Influence of father on student
Student FG5B: "For me I wanted to go to Australia to study a degree but in the end my parents had financial problems so I came to ….. The price is affordable and it is really local".	Preference to study abroad Affordable and local

4.8.1.2 Phase 2 Generating initial codes

After fully familiarising myself with the data from the transcripts and producing a list of initial thoughts and ideas that seemed interesting at this stage, I started producing initial codes from the data. Codes are, as Boyatzis (1998, 63) stated, "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon". They are, in part, a means of reducing the data into more manageable pieces, giving labels to those bits of data so they can be retrieved at a later stage (Froggatt, 2001) although they are also part of the analytical process (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and as Strauss and Corbin (1998, 113) stated, "Categories have analytic power because they have the potential to explain and predict". The codes were developed manually by me rather than through an appropriate computer package (see paragraph 4.6).

I systematically went though each transcript making notes in the margin against all relevant pieces of script I thought were interesting statements, remarks or observations looking for repetitions, similiarities and differences in answering the research questions (based on the criteria of Ryan and Bernard (2003); Charmaz (2006); and Guest et al. (2012) discussed above) as well as using coloured marker pens to identify early patterns. However, it needs to be noted, as Saldana in Savin - Baden and Howell-Major (2013, 423) stated, "…each coder brings not only an analytical lens but different analytical filters to the enterprise….coding is not a precise science: its primarily an interpretive act".

As part of this process it was important to make clear the method I used for identifying codes and themes to ensure transparency to allow others to see how the findings were derived and why I thought they were significant as part of this research (Ward et al., 2013; Bryman, 2012; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). As Ryan and Bernard (2003, 86) stated, "We rarely see descriptions (even in footnotes or appendices) of how researchers came to discover the themes they report in their articles" so I knew this was an important aspect for me to set out. However, it was also important not to have such a rigid method that did not allow some flexibility in terms of analytic options (so long as there was a consisten approach) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and to understand that my judgement as the researcher was the most important way of determining which codes and themes were most important and

interesting as I was the most familiar with the data having conducted the interviews and focus groups and carried out the transcriptions personally. I also took note of Sipe and Ghiso (2004, 482-483) when they stated, “All coding is a judgement call…. since we bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, (and) our quirks” to the process”.

Losing the context of what has been said as part of the coding process is a common criticism of the method (Bryman, 2012) and so it was important for me to link my notes and codes to the relevant extracts. These were basic codes at this stage and I made as many as possible (Bryman, 2012). I then produced a list of these intial codes for each focus group and interview with an identifer letter and number to make sure that the piece of data could be easily identified within the transcript. In total, for all the transcripts, there were just under 700 basic codes generated. Appendix 8 is an example of a code book linking back to the transcript extracts for a sending institution staff member.

4.8.1.3 Phase 3 Searching for themes

The analysis of the focus groups considered the individual as well as the group context and dynamics (Carey and Smith, 1994). All the data for this phase was coded and the analysis involved sorting all the codes into possible broader or overarching themes. All the codes, with letters and numbers linking back to the extract of text they came from, were put onto separarate pieces of paper so they could be looked at and organised into separate piles corresponding to intial themes. Appendix 9 shows an example of the host institution grouping of codes into the initial theme of cultural awareness. Initial thematic maps were then produced for each year of the focus groups (Year 1, 2 and 3) (See Appendix 10 for an example) as well as for the host and sending staff interviews (see Appendix 11 for an example).

Many more themes and sub themes were identified at this stage than would be identified in the final thematic map, but it was important to go through this phase detail. The format of the initial thematic maps is based on that used by Frith and Gleeson (2004). This format was chosen by me for my research as Braun and Clarke (2006) identified the research of Frith and Gleeson (2004) as a particularly good

example of an inductive thematic analysis and so it added clarity and consistency to the approach.

Particular thought was given to the relationship between codes and the themes, along with sub themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Some codes, at this stage, did not fit neatly into any identified themes and so a theme called 'miscellaneous' was created for future analysis, consideration and use, although I was aware that not all codes may fit neatly and that some may be omitted because they did not relate to the research questions.

4.8.1.4 Phase 4 Reviewing themes

This phase involved reviewing and then refining the initial themes, to see which could be combined, left as they were, or omitted. It was clear at this stage, looking at all the initial themes, that some could be combined, whilst others could become sub themes. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase took some time as I went through all data again along with the intial themes and sub themes. I was searching for patterns in the data (Guest et al., 2012), taking into account thematic cues as suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003) discussed above, and asking "what are these people talking about?" in relation to my research objectives (Guest et al., 2012, 67). By this process I was able to ensure the revised set of themes were refined considerably but still telling a coherent story fully based on my data. Based on Braun and Clarke (2006, 91) there was a need for me to recode some of the data, "as coding is an ongoing organic process". A key refinement from this phase was that a central theme was emerging which weaved through all the data – that of 'culture'.

4.8.1.5 Phase 5 Defining and naming themes

By this stage I felt I had a coherent and satisfactory thematic map of my data. The themes were interrelated, coherent and consistent with little or no overlap between the themes. The final themes are not in any order of priority of importance. It was important for me to ensure that the codes emerged from the data and the themes were based on the codes. As Clarke and Braun (2013, 128) stated:

> "Failure to construct codes that successfully evoke [*relevant features of*] the data is problematic because themes are developed from codes, rather than directly from the data. If the codes, alone, successfully evoke the data then they work; if not, coding labels need to be refined".

The coding and identification of themes from the transcripts of the focus groups and individual interviews was carried out by myself. To further enhance the validity of the codes and themes identified by me, and to aid coherence and replicability, my research assistant, who was present at the focus groups and took notes for me at these meetings, also looked at the codes and themes as part of an 'inter-coder agreement check' (Creswell, 2007, 210). A discussion then took place between us after which final themes were identified. As Ryan and Bernard (2003) have stated, there is not just one unique solution in defining themes and there could be many ways of seeing the data. Ryan and Bernard (2003, 103) went on to state that, "there is no ultimate demonstration of validity" but there are ways to help achieve a greater clarity and gain agreement, but ultimately, it is down to the judgement of the researcher - myself (Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

By the end of this phase it was important for me to be able to clearly define, in a concise way, each of the final themes (shown in Table 4.6). taking into account the views of Nowell et al. (2017, 2) who argued, "When conducting data analysis, the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis, making judgments about coding, theming, decontextualizing, and recontextualizing the data".

Table 4.6 Scope and content of each theme

Overarching Theme	**Scope and Content**
CULTURE	The influences, differences and awareness of culture of the students (and staff) and how culture is interwoven into every aspect of TNE. The intercultural and cross-cultural dimension at national and local level and the resultant conflicts and challenges faced by students (and staff). The effects of the sociocultural landscapes of both Malaysia and the UK on the way students (and staff) study, work and live.

Theme	
Family	The importance of family (parents, siblings and the wider family) in advising and deciding where children will study and on what programme as well as their career aspirations. The cultural importance of family in these choices and historical consequences of Malaysia's colonial past.
Learning and teaching	The style and culture of learning, teaching and assessment across two countries and the support given to students by the host institution.
Behaviour	Behaviour is the way in which a person acts toward others. The effects of culture on behaviour of students (and staff from both institutions).
Identity	How and why students (and staff) identify with the host and sending institutions and the implications for their experience in studying (and working) at the host institution and/or in the UK. The implications may impact on how they feel about either institution, their expectations and their feelings towards both institutions, including the cultural and intercultural impact and issues that may arise from their experiences and expectations.

4.8.1.6 Phase 6 Producing the report

I took the view that the coding is an ongoing process and will need to be developed and refined throughout the total research process (Guest et al., 2012). Guest et al. (2012, 76) stated that, " Recoding is not a sign that you have done things wrong, it is simply part of doing things well". This final phase involved setting out the results which are contained in chapter 5. Chapter 5 tells the complete story, in a coherent way, from the students and staff point of view from the data collected, with important quotes. Chapter 6 then relates the analysis back to the research questions and the previous literature reviewed in chapter 3.

4.9 Possible impediments in carrying out my research

Ziguras and Hoare, (2009) discussed possible impediments to carrying out research on TNE students. These are set out in Table 4.7 with how these possible impediments were overcome by me for this research.

Table 4.7 Possible impediments in carrying out my research and how they were overcome

Possible impediments	How they were overcome
Lack of familiarity with transnational education in research institutions, apart from those directly involved.	Both the host and sending institutions had a history in TNE research; Shared strategic objectives of both institutions for TNE.
Logistical issues, such as distance, cost of travel and accommodation for researchers based in exporting country.	The researcher was able to carry out the research on paid for visits as part of his job. Skype interviews for host staff were carried out.
Access to research sites is often limited by: –Students' wariness. –Researchers' outsider status.	Student wariness was a possibility but care was taken by the researcher to stress anonymity and confidentiality and put students (and staff) at their ease. The researcher was an insider so had access to students and staff but care was needed to reflect on his status and how this may affect the research.
Resistance by one or both partners to researcher presence.	Both institutions were happy to support this research.
Transparency and open reflection are culturally weighted concepts.	This is the most important to consider. The researcher's reflexive approach was important at each stage of the research process.

4.10 Research quality

Validity and reliability in quantitative research are what Savin–Baden and Howell-Major (2013, 473) stated as the "gold standard" in ensuring quality in the research process. However, there is much written on whether the concepts of validity and reliability are appropriate for qualitative research (Lub, 2015). Although validity in qualitative research is a much discussed topic in journal articles, there is general agreement that qualitative researchers need to show that the outcomes from their research are credible (Creswell and Miller, 2000). The approach to quality depends on the philosophical approach taken (Savin–Baden and Howell-Major, 2013) with different paradigms needing different approaches (Lub, 2015). In the case of my research, an interpretivist approach was taken in which the criteria for quality was based on rigour (Creswell, 1998). However, Sandelowski (1993, 1) stated that, "The

problem of rigour in qualitative research continues to arouse, beguile and misdirect" as there is no common understanding. There is the possibility of member validation or obtaining agreement from the participants themselves to establish the validity of my interpretations of the data (Sandelowski, 1986). However, there are issues with this approach (Morse, 1997; Sandelowski, 1993) and logistically and physically it was difficult for me to achieve, even if appropriate. However, a peer review and debriefing after each focus group was conducted with my research assistant (who was present at each focus group and had made notes) who read and discussed the transcriptions and the results of the thematic analysis which added credibility to the study (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Sandelowski (1993, 5) went on to assert that, "The typically narrative nature of interview data makes the problem of determining accuracy of meaning and intention a deeply theoretical and moral one". Whittemore et al. (2001, 534) also stated that, "Every study has biases and particular threats to validity, all methods have limitations, and research involves multiple interpretations as well as a moral and ethical component inherent in judgements". Jootun (2009, 45) reinforced this view by stating that, "Qualitative studies are prone to a degree of subjectivity because interpretation of the participant's behaviour and collected data is influenced by the values, beliefs, experience and interest of the researcher". But as Jootun (2009, 42) also stated, "Reflecting on the process of one's research and trying to understand how one's own values and views may influence findings (actually) adds credibility to the research and should be part of any method of qualitative enquiry". Ward et al. (2013, 2425) also argued that, "Keeping a reflexive journal improves rigour by ensuring that procedures during the study and emerging ideas are recorded from recruitment of participants through the development of themes". My reflexive practice outlined above was, therefore, important in ensuring rigour in my research. As Morse, 1997, 447) argued:

> "…..researchers must learn to trust themselves and their judgements and be prepared to defend their interpretations and analyses. But it is death to one's study to simplify one's insights, coding, and analyses so that another person may place the same piece of datum in the same category".

As Pring, (2000, 250) asserted, "No research methodology is value free, or free of the social and political context in which it is used".

4.11 My reflexive approach and positionality

This research was conducted within my professional work sphere between my own university in the UK and the partner college in Malaysia. I am a senior manager at my university and a key part of my work is to visit and work with the partner college, particularly from an academic quality perspective. An important issue arose, therefore, during this research, concerning a possible conflict between my work role as a senior manager and as a researcher. Mercer (2007) noted the challenges faced by educational researchers investigating the places where they work and discussed the concept of insider and outsider dichotomy or, as she argued, better understood as a continuum.

I started my research on the assumption that as a researcher I was a part of the social world that I was investigating, and that this social world is an already interpreted world by the actors. I, therefore, brought my own biography to this research that I needed to acknowledge, seeking to understand my part in, or influence on, this research through my motives, feelings and experiences as researcher (Cohen, et al., 2018). As part of the mitigation of a possible conflict of roles, I adopted a reflexive approach by keeping a research journal to analyse the effect on myself during the research process. As Garrick (1999, 155) asserted, "Self-understanding (in so far as this is possible) lies at the heart …of qualitative education research".

Davies (2012) argued that social scientists have emotions about the subjects they study and how to juxtapose the personal and impersonal analysis. She went on to state that we take away the personal and emotional but this dispassionate and emotionless style of communicating is in conflict with a situation where our emotions are heavily involved.

It was essential for me, therefore, to be aware how I may shape the story being investigated. This was a key issue for me to consider in my research journal as a major part of my daily work life (and so emotions) is involved in trying to improve the student experience at my own university and that of my university's international partners. I, therefore, needed to consider and acknowledge the possible conflict of being an insider and/or outsider in my research and the possible difficulties of sometimes being on the border between the two (Arber, 2006).

Hellawell (2006, 486) argued that, "….. the researcher should be both inside and outside the perceptions of the researched" and discussed both empathy as well as alienation as being useful qualities for a researcher. Mercer (2007) also argued that there are hidden ethical and methodological dilemmas of 'insiderness'. As Healey (2017) noted, insider research can lead to a lack of objectivity, may confirm one's own views or prejudices, and may allow the researcher to fill in possible gaps without the evidence. These were issues that I had to consider and mitigate against as I went through the research process.

This possible conflict of being an insider and/or outsider could have affected the responses from the students and staff and so it was important for me to acknowledge this and to mitigate it as far as possible. In addition, I was aware of the relevance of my relationship to the students and staff who were participating in the research and that I was, therefore, emotionally linked to my research. One of the issues I needed to be aware of was the power imbalance and relationship particularly with the Malaysian private college in relation to both staff and students. Mercer (2007) discussed how people may be reluctant to share information for fear of being judged. She stated that it was like wielding a double-edged sword in that what insider researchers gain in terms of their extensive and intimate knowledge of the culture and taken-for-granted understandings of the actors may be lost in terms of their myopia and their inability to make the familiar strange.

In my role at my university and my relationship with the Malaysian private college, the issues discussed above needed to be carefully handled. I therefore stressed to the students and staff who participated in the research, that my role in this context was that of a research student at the University of Lincoln (as opposed to a senior academic member of staff at my university) and that the process would give complete anonymity and confidentiality to the participants. When sending e-mails to participants, I did not use my work signature but that of a research student. When moderating the student focus groups, I did not dress formally but wore casual clothes as not to give the impression of a formal meeting and so put the students, as far as possible, at their ease. I also ensured that the room where the student focus groups took place was set out in a non-confrontational way in a comfortable and non-threatening environment along with refreshments being available. Students

were happy to talk openly and confidently in the subsequent discussions within the focus groups and I gained confidence that students were being honest in their views, particularly as they were prepared to be critical on certain subjects.

In addition, to try to ensure that the themes from the data analysis were not just a reflection of my own prejudices and preconceptions, but were actually present in the data, I used a reflexive approach to analyse the effect of myself on the research process. This meant as a reflexive researcher I did not try, "to divide parts of the self from the whole" (Rose and Webb, 1998, 556). The researcher should not be judgemental in any way and any of their own biases, opinions and personal values should not be revealed or affect their behaviour as part of the interview process (Cohen et al., 2018).

I also used my research journal as an aide-memoire to keep a note and record what I did at different times in my research (Bryman, 2016). Through self-reflection, I tried to set out my own values and political standpoints so as not to affect unduly the data collected and the analysis of the data (Jootun, 2009). I wrote notes in my journal along the research journey on my assumptions about the research topic as well as my values, and life and professional experiences and how these might affect my thought processes and actions, if at all, when carrying out the research and particularly during the data collection and analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2013). As an example of this approach, extracts from my journal are shown in Appendix 7. My journal helped raise my awareness of influences on my interpretation of the data and my relationship to the research topic and participants (Jootun, 2009).

I made notes after each focus group and interview about how well they went, any new ideas and issues that arose that could affect how I proceeded in the future and about the location and logistics of the focus groups and interviews (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Jootun (2009, 42) argued that, "Reflecting on the process of one's research and trying to understand how one's own values and views may influence findings adds credibility to the research and should be part of any method of qualitative enquiry". This helped reinforce my thoughts on my reflexive approach.

Mercer (2007) stated that because access is constantly available, it is often harder to tell where research stops, and the rest of life begins. This was an issue for me insofar as knowing when the research was completed and carrying on doing my 'day' job with the Malaysian partner. If work issues arose as part of the research, I needed to separate out my managerial role of attempting to resolve them, and as a researcher using them as part of the findings. This in part started as an issue for me with the Pilot stage of this research.

However, there can be advantages (as well as challenges) of being a research insider such as the value of shared experiences, the value of greater access, the value of cultural interpretation and the value of deeper understanding and clarity of thought for the researcher (Labaree, 2002). Hockey (1993) cited in Hellawell (2006, 488) stressed the strengths of the insider viewpoint and argued that, "The advantages of researching in familiar settings, for example the relative lack of culture shock or disorientation, the possibility of enhanced rapport and communication, the ability to gauge the honesty and accuracy of responses, and the likelihood that respondents will reveal more intimate details of their lives to someone considered empathetic are juxtaposed with the problems that proponents of insider research nevertheless acknowledged." I, therefore, needed to be aware of how important it can be as an insider, as this can allow easier access to participants than would otherwise have been the case (Healey, 2017; Arber, 2006). Mercer (2007) pointed out that it is generally presumed that access is more easily granted to the insider researcher and that data collection is less time consuming. In addition, as an insider researcher, it could be argued that I may have had more credibility and respect from those staff and students who I was researching as I was able to understand more fully, and they may have had more confidence in my judgements, about the complexities of the topic and therefore give a more accurate picture of what was being said to me (Hockey, 1993). Hannabus (2000, 103) also discussed the advantages of being a research insider and stated:

> "The [*insider*] researcher knows his/her environment well, knows by instinct what can be done and how far old friendships and favours can be pressed, just when and where to meet up for interviews, what the power structures and the moral mazes and subtexts of the company are and so what taboos to avoid, what shibboleths to mumble and bureaucrats to placate. They are familiar

with the organisational culture, the routines and the scripts of the workplaces".

It was important for me, as part of my reflexive approach, to receive, discuss and reflect on views from expert and interested audiences as my research proceeded. I therefore presented my research, at its different stages, to conferences (and in one case at my own university's Student Educational and Experience Committee, a senior committee, chaired by a pro-vice chancellor) in order to receive a wide variety of comments and feedback to help inform my thinking on this research (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Details of conferences attended and presentations that the researcher gave as part of this research

Date	Venue	Conference
2nd May 2017	University of Keele	British Sociological Society Regional Event, Transnational education at a juncture: Sociological futures post-Brexit
23rd January 2018	(My own university)	Student Educational and Experience Committee
16th March 2018	Council for Validating Universities (CVU), London	Operational Development and Support of International Partnerships

Discussions at these presentations, and feedback from them, included possible ethical and cultural issues with my research, logistical issues of carrying out research at a distance in Malaysia and any power imbalances between myself and the students and staff. Initial findings and themes were discussed with these expert audiences and I was able to review and reflect on my research at each of the stages based on this feedback. It was interesting to note at the Student Educational and Experience Committee that they had been discussing similar issues for home students.

4.12 Ethical considerations and issues

I took the same view for this research as argued by Piper and Simons (2005, 56), in that "Ethical practice is often defined as 'doing no harm' but that as researchers we should "also aspire to do 'good', in other words to conduct research that benefits participants in positive ways". This was very important to me and hence why I

undertook a professional doctorate to improve and enhance my own professional practice, to influence the practice of others and ultimately endeavour to improve the TNE student experience.

Shamoo and Resnik (2009, 7) cited in Healey (2017) argued that for research, "ethical norms are:

1. honesty and integrity – do not misrepresent data or deceive people, act with sincerity;
2. objectivity – avoid bias;
3. carefulness – be diligent;
4. openness – be willing to share research outputs and accept criticism;
5. respect the intellectual property of others;
6. confidentiality – protect confidential data and the interests of human participants".

I endeavoured to comply with all of these six aspects. It was anticipated that the study would cause little, if any, physical or psychological distress although sensitive or emotive issues could arise, and dissonant views and perspectives emerge. My extensive experience of working with overseas partners and students, however, enabled me to facilitate such discussions skilfully without suppressing views.

Staff and student demographic data such as gender and level of study were gathered. Code numbers were assigned to the interview recordings and transcripts and the list of codes and names stored in a locked cupboard along with information on a password protected computer. Anonymised quotations from participants and descriptions have been included in the thesis. All data gathered will be destroyed upon completion of the qualification gained after this thesis and its associated publications. Data will only be stored, therefore, for a maximum of two years after completion of the award. Before each focus group and interview, the study was discussed with participants. An information sheet and consent form were given to participants with the aims of the study and their possible voluntary involvement. Once verbal agreement had been obtained, the focus groups and interviews were scheduled. Any questions were answered before agreement to participate was

obtained in writing. Assurances concerning anonymity and confidentiality were stressed and given to all participants.

Warwick (1983) cited in Robinson-Plant (2005, 94) discussed the special challenges of cross-cultural research and argued that they, "raise ethical questions that are different in degree, and sometimes, in kind, from those seen in uni-cultural projects". For instance, whether and how to adapt to cultural differences in behaviour. This dilemma was carefully considered by me. The rich mix of cultures and nationalities of the staff and students (and some students were not from Malaysia but from other countries) and any resulting cultural sensitivities were taken into account in this study. There may have been possible issues with gender and ethnicity, particularly in the Malaysian setting (Razak, 2005 cited in Robinson-Plant, 2005) but these were also taken into account by me by being sensitive to the participants cultural values. My experience of working in Malaysia over a number of years was used to ensure that all sensitivities were managed carefully.

It should also be noted that there are other ethical considerations to understand and consider with researching TNE in Malaysia. Malaysia has some different cultural and ethical standards and laws compared to the UK. For instance, LGBT issues are viewed differently in Malaysia and the UK from an ethical and legal point of view.

Waterval (2015, 72) observed that in TNE host countries, "education serves not only an educational but also a nation-building goal, which is reflected in courses on national values and ethics". This sometimes can cause challenges between the host and sending institutions when views on ethics diverge. Malaysia also has different laws relating to disability and access to studying at HE level, as well as the physical access within buildings for disabled students. There can also be ethical learning and teaching issues. For instance, Scudamore (2013, 21) observed that, "Students have very different world views that impact on studying some topics. Studying may raise a range of contentious issues in a diverse classroom. Topics addressing, for example, evolution, social policy, interpretation of history, religious practices, ethics will highlight a multitude of experiences, beliefs and personal convictions". In addition, the Malaysian government has been concerned that private TNE providers may not prepare their students with appropriate moral and ethical values,

which the government consider to be important in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Malaysia. Private TNE providers, such as the host institution in this research study have, therefore, been required to provide for the teaching of Islamic Studies, moral education and ethnic relations (Morshidi, 2006). This is over and above the curriculum required by the UK franchised programme.

At the Malaysian private college in this research there were ethical issues such as the college staff talking directly to the parents of HE students. This was seen as a quite acceptable behaviour in Malaysia (and by the students and the host institution) whereas in the UK, and at the sending institution, this would not have been allowed. Due diligence is carried out by the sending institution when partnerships are developed but ethical and cultural differences are not necessarily always considered. Sidhu and Christie (2015, 308) in their research observed that, "In practice, the partners worked overtime to avoid … conflicts. For example, the syllabus recommended by the Department of Education for the ethics course required under Malaysian law was politically and religiously loaded, so Monash simply ignored it. If Malaysian entry or course approval requirements clashed with Monash regulations, the university bent or even broke the rules of its Education Committee". This overlooking of differences in ethical and cultural behaviour was sometimes the case between the two partners in this research. Wilkins (2015) wrote about the numerous ethical arguments against the case for international branch campuses. For example, the lack of academic freedom and civil liberties in TNE host countries. Wilkins (2015, 1) argued that, "Higher education institutions will have to continue treading the thin line between trying to fit in with their host cultures while simultaneously trying to achieve academic freedom and improve local social, political, and legal conditions". Although writing about international branch campuses, the same case can be argued for other forms of TNE, and ethical and cultural issues in partnership working must be taken account of if partnerships, and so the student experience, are to be successful.

Formal ethics approval to carry out this research was granted from the University of Lincoln on 7th September 2016 from the School of Education Research Committee (See Appendix 1).

4.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed the importance and relevance of educational research and the philosophical approach to this research study. It also covered the design and data collection methods chosen to answer the research questions and the reasons behind using manual handling of the data instead using a CAQDAS programme. The pilot study was outlined as well as the choice of research instruments and how the data was collected and transcribed. The choice of thematic analysis for the analysis of the research data was discussed in detail, with explanations of the phases of the data analysis. Possible impediments to the research and how they were overcome were set out as well as a discussion on research quality and how validity was ensured. Finally, my reflexive approach, my researcher positionality and ethical considerations and issues were considered.

The next chapter will tell the TNE students' full and interesting account of their experiences, in their own words. The findings are outlined with the overarching theme of culture and the other four key themes and their sub-themes. Each theme that has emerged from the data is presented in detail with relevant supporting quotes telling the vivid story from the students (and staff) perspective. Finally, the findings are summarised. The findings will then be discussed in chapter 6 with the overarching theme of culture and the other four key themes and their sub-themes. Each theme from the data will be discussed in detail in that chapter with relevant supporting and illustrative quotes from students and staff.

Chapter Five: Presentation of the Findings

"What is conspicuously missing from the research literature is the voice of the student." (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005, 40)

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore, in-depth, perceptions and experiences of students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking a UK franchise business programme in Malaysia and to understand the value they may place on these TNE experiences. TNE students are not being fully heard (Caruana and Montgomery, 2015) and, therefore, their experiences are being neglected (Waters and Leung, 2013). The voice of the TNE student is largely missing from the research literature (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005) and so it was important to give them a voice and, importantly, to listen to what they were saying.

The research aims, therefore, to tell the TNE students' full and interesting account of their experiences, in their own words, in the findings below. This is their story.

It was also important to talk to relevant host and sending institution staff to understand their views in the context of the student experiences and to learn from the student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience.

In the findings below, I have set out the interesting accounts and valuable insights from the students and staff point of view for each identified theme and sub theme (see Table 5.1) by using a variety of illustrative, sometimes vivid and key verbatim quotes, from the student focus groups and staff interviews to increase the validity of the findings (Guest et al., 2012). The quotes have not been altered from the original transcripts (in which the participant's contribution was transcribed verbatim) and so there are, in some instances, grammatical errors, but quotes are as the students and staff spoke (Nowell et al., 2017).

In my narrative in telling the story for each theme and sub-theme, I have been careful in not using numerical frequencies to describe what I found in the focus groups. I have used general trends and so have used words such as most students, or a few

students, or an individual student, to describe a particular issue that was being discussed, ensuring that this variability is useful and informative (Guest et al., 2012). I have also used the word ‘they’ rather than ‘he’ or ‘she’ in the staff quotations to ensure confidentiality for all of the staff participants. However, for the students, I have used their gender when using their quotes as it would be impossible to identify any individual.

Basic demographic details of the students who took part in the six focus groups can be seen in Table 4.1 in chapter 4. Each student and staff member have specific identifier letters and numbers. For example, Focus Group 1 is FG1 with a letter denoting which student said what e.g. FG1B (Focus Group 1, Student B). Details can be seen in Table 4.2 in chapter 4. The six staff were chosen from the host and sending institutions because of the role they play at each institution as far as TNE is concerned. Table 4.3 in chapter 4 shows these details. Each academic staff member is identified by an H (Host) or S (Sending) and a number.

The chapter is completed with a summary of the findings along with concluding remarks. A discussion and analysis of the findings are then set out in chapter 6.

5.2 Students and staff finding their voice

Table 5.1 shows the composite and final themes and sub themes that have emerged from the data. Guest et al. (2012) discussed, when writing up results for thematic analysis, that the research should identify the overarching or uber-theme. Guest et al. (2012) called this the ‘anchor’ to the findings chapter. For my research study, the anchor became clear after the first student focus groups and staff interviews. All the themes that have been identified and have emerged from the data relate to and are linked in some way to the central or over-arching theme of ‘culture’. By this, I am referring to the influences, differences and awareness of culture on and by the students (and staff) and how culture is interwoven into every aspect of TNE. These cultural findings will be set out under the individual main themes rather than under a separate heading as they are fundamental to each theme.

It was important for me to be able to clearly define what my themes were (and so were not as well) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and to be able to briefly describe the scope and content of each theme. This is shown in Table 4.6 in chapter 4.

Table 5.1 The final themes and sub themes that emerged from the student focus groups and staff interviews

Over-arching theme: CULTURE			
Family	**Learning and teaching**	**Behaviour**	**Identity**
Involvement of parents and extended family	Teaching styles	Loss of face	Quality
Word of mouth	Part-time lecturers	Quietness and deference	Student identity whilst studying
Family pride	Access to and availability of staff	Relationships and attitudes	Western degree
Historical	Feedback and moderation		Global awareness and study and work abroad
Choice of institution	Feedback from students		
Brand, Image and reputation	Group work		
Value for money and affordability			
Convenience			
Employability and career opportunities			

5.3 Family

The meaning of family for this theme highlights the importance of family in advising and deciding where offspring will study and on what higher education (HE) programme, as well as career choices and future employment. The cultural importance of family and historical consequences of Malaysia's colonial past is also a key part of this theme. Table 5.1 sets out the family theme and sub themes that will be presented.

A key finding from this research highlights how important the Malaysian family is in the lives of students as they experience their HE journey. In particular, the data from my research shows the influence and significant role of parents, siblings, the extended family as well as friends. This influence involved where students should study as well as what they should study. This influence also included what careers and jobs students may go into after graduation and whether they should stay in Malaysia or go abroad. Students spoke openly, and without any prompting, of the importance of their family in their HE journey.

5.3.1 Involvement of parents and extended family

Throughout the student focus groups and staff interviews, it seemed clear from what was being said, that the family drives educational decisions for their offspring. As a typical example of this, a first-year student repeatedly spoke about his father and parents. The student said that:

> "For me I chose (*the host institution*) because coming from high school my parents told me because I did not really know what I wanted to study. My parents recommended me doing something in business, because I don't like science. So, I decided to take a course in business. I joined the foundation programme. Then I choose among a few universities, like *(…university and …university)* and some others. My father wanted me to actually take accounting. So, I wasn't really very sure and then there is a chance I might go abroad for a year to study, an exchange programme, and then my father think that for accounting the UK is better than Australia. In *(…university)*, they provide an exchange programme to Australia but my father think that it's better in the UK. So, in (*the host institution)* they have this exchange programme with (*the sending university*). And the fees are affordable by my family. So, we choose (*the host institution)"* (FG4A).

This example helps show just how much the parents influence the decision making and how receptive students are to their parents' wishes, and at the end of the conversation the student said, "So, we choose……", meaning that it was a mutual decision, which supports the finding that the family is important in the decision-making process. This was typical of student when they talked about and described how decisions were made and how their parents were involved. No student complained or was negative about this involvement, rather the opposite, insofar as students were quite happy to talk about this and agreed about how important the family was, particularly their parents. The students seemed content from what they

said and how they expressed it, to defer to their family's wishes. Indeed, in listening to the students talk, it appeared that this was a normal expectation out of respect for parents and part of the influence of their cultural values in terms of the role of family in Malaysia.

It is important to note how the term 'we' was often used by students in referring to the family and themselves. It appeared that parents were involved in their lives, not just in choosing the institution or the programme to study in that institution, but also whilst studying there. A sending institution academic, who had spent some time at the host institution in Malaysia explained how they saw the influence of parents:

> "I don't think I saw a student without the parents when they came to one of those recruitment type days. And quite often, when I was sat in my office in the college, I would still sometimes get the parents along as well. So yes, the parents are very involved. And often the people asking the questions when you speak to the students" (S3).

The same academic went on to say, "A lot of times I have spoken to mums and dads altogether with them asking the questions….and parents often ask how (*host institution)* supports the programme" (S3).

The issue of the cultural context in Malaysia, the deference shown by children to their parents and the important and often considerable financial investment made by parents into their children's education is well summed up by one of the academics from the sending institution:

> "It is a very different cultural context and particularly more deference to parents than in the UK. And the parents are actually stumping up the money in a lot of the cases via their pension pot to underwrite the degree programme while of course in the UK the students take up their own debt. So, I guess there is that factor at play as well. So generally speaking, more deferential and the family culture significantly more important" (S1).

In addition to parents, the effect of older siblings on the decisions where students should study was also an important finding. An example of a second year female student below shows that the experience of her brother was important:

FG5B	"For me, my brother came here to (*the host institution)* on the foundation programme and he went for (*university*) as well. He has graduated with second class honours".
Researcher	"So, he introduced you to (the host institution) by saying it is a very good College"?
FG5B	"Well, I just followed him".
Researcher	"But did he say it was good, bad or…"?
FG5B	"He said it was quite good. And it suited my parent's financial situation as well".

A further example was from a final year male student, shown below:

FG3D	"My sister is in senior year here, on the same programme….no different programme but under (*the sending institution*)".
Researcher	"Okay, okay so that kind of persuaded you to want to come"?
FG3D	"She said it was interesting and really cool".

One of the students in the pilot study also talked about the influence of a family member, her uncle, on how study in the UK would not be easy:

> "I think there are lots of areas I need to improve. But I can still remember, before I did the degree, one of my uncles did an MBA in the UK and he told me it's not going to be easy if you are going to do a degree in UK. So, I actually did some reading about the subject and the UK. But, I don't think it's enough for me to get high marks" (P1).

It should be noted, also, that many students talked about other advice that was given to them in their decision making and HE journeys. Some mentioned their schools and teachers having a big influence on them, others mentioned careers fairs that they had attended, others talked of support and advice from lecturers. Many talked about the value of friends and friendships and how important that was to them. But from this research, it is the family that has been the key influence in their educational decision making and experiences on their HE journey and beyond.

5.3.2 Word of mouth

As well as the strong influence of parents and the wider family, word of mouth between families and friends was important to students. Students spoke of friends of the family giving advice and passing on information to each other to aid the decision-making process. This included wider family members such as aunts and

uncles who had often studied and/or worked abroad, often in the UK, giving advice to their nieces and nephews about how important getting a degree and studying and working abroad in the UK is. Family members, having had a good HE experience in the past, in the UK or on a UK TNE programme, was important for them to then advise and recommend to other family members. A member of the host institution in their interview confirmed that word of mouth was important by stating, "Yes, the word of mouth is very crucial when it comes to the market" (H2).

A further example of word of mouth being important to students, is from a final year student, who said:

> "Yes, actually I had like a relative who graduated from *(the sending institution)* about 10 years ago and he is doing quite well in Malaysia. And I have a few friends who were here last year as well. They've actually told me quite a lot" (P2).

In terms of friends and other influencing students, one final year student said, "I heard about a friend who went to UK who then went to (*the sending institution*) and had a time of his life" (FG3B).

Much discussion in the student focus groups was around which courses to take at the host institution. The host institution had partnerships with an Australian partner as well as the UK sending institution and students spoke of the perceived differences between the courses and the teaching, learning and assessment approaches. A number of students described what they understood those differences were, mainly gained from siblings and friends who were on either the UK or Australian courses. A typical comment was from a second year student who said:

> "Some of my friends study at *(an Australian university).* As I am working at *(the host institution*) part-time I get to know the courses at *(the sending university)* and *(the Australian university)* and how they suffer at *(the Australian university)* taking a lot of subjects" (FG5D).

5.3.3 Family Pride

Family pride of Malaysians was found to be important as part of this research. This was not specifically or overtly expressed by students but was more implicit in their

discussions. However, family pride was openly addressed by a member of the host institution. The conversation related to quality assurance processes but illustrates how important family pride and prestige is to Malaysian families and how this can affect the experiences of students. The host academic told me that in their discussions with parents, pride and prestige often came up:

> "Arguments with parents are often about I pay you, so they should pass this module. If you sit down and explain the quality assurance processes with parents but it is about the family, and what drives the family is prestige, about pride so they can't accept the fact that my child was getting A grades, and I come here, and you are telling my child is not up to that standard. So, they are not bothered about your QA, I just need to know my son has passed" (H1).

In addition, the same host academic expanded on this:

> "It boils down to a statement whereby family pride and prestige are important. A parent said I can't sit on a table full of businessmen and say my son has got kicked out of university or just barely passing. I can't have that. So, it sums up the whole difficulty that we have – it is about the status of a family, how children are educated. As long as they get good grades they don't care how it comes about" (H1).

Family pride and culture and the underlying politics in Malaysia, past and present, giving a helpful context, was related by another host institution academic:

> "The trouble with education in Malaysia it is very much focussed on the middle class. The higher classes, the people that can afford it, their children will have gone to private schools, A levels, the BAC and they will leave the country. There is a genuine perception in Malaysia, especially quite prevalent in the Chinese communities, and in the Indian communities – not based on race but the economics/wealth of the families in those communities. If you look back in the old days, even 30-40 years ago, it would be great family pride if you were educated, and especially if you were educated overseas. It is a cultural perception of pride. So, it is very important for many families because of that, especially in the Indian and Chinese communities. So, based on that it is family pride, so a strong influence of family into getting the right education and studies. Now in terms of the choice we have a lot of politics coming into play in the 1970s, 1980s whereby the non-Malaysians had a bit more difficult time in getting into the public universities and so came the rise of private education. And with that families are able to afford to send their children to private education. Pride is a key issue, so I want my children to be in a recognised university and something I can afford" (H2).

5.3.4 Historical

The effects of the colonial past of Malaysia, being part of the British Empire until its independence in 1957, also appeared from my research, to have an effect on the Malaysian family and their relationship with Britain and everything British. A number of students, whilst discussing their TNE journey in Malaysia, talked about their family wishes for them to get a British education. One student said, "I think it's fairly important for (*the host institution*) to be linked to the UK as my parents wanted me to study in the UK, not in the States or Australia" (FG1E).

Another student in expressing his opinion about prestige and the historical past was quite upfront in acknowledging the importance of the effect of the colonisation of Malaysia in the past and so the importance and prestige of gaining a foreign certificate from a Western university. He said:

> "There's this whole idea of prestige that's associated with a Western education I mean to be blunt there's years of colonisation and there is a certain form of prestige attached to a foreign, you know a foreign certificate when you leave in comparison to say elsewhere" (FG2B).

An academic from the sending institution did talk, not surprisingly, about how strong the British brand is, particularly to the parents of students. They told me:

> "I think the British brand is still very strong, particularly for parents. They like the idea of a British education. So, I think that is one factor in terms of choice, the Britishness and the regard they hold for the UK and obviously Malaysia as a former colony. So, people like the British brand" (S1).

However, it may be that the influence of the British past, and so brand, is waning somewhat now as some other students talked about looking at other countries to study in before eventually choosing the host institution. A sending institution academic said:

> "I wouldn't underestimate the importance of probably all of those students have still got a living relative who was a member of the empire and there is a lot of respect. We weren't that good at treating local populations as equals in our empire days. And those elderly relatives, and their children, whose student is the parent, are here today, but that will fade as time goes on" (S2).

It was interesting to hear many of the students talk about parents wanting them to have a UK degree but there was limited talk from students saying they had to have a UK degree although some students did want this. They appeared to be quite happy with a Western degree, whether from the UK, Australia or the USA which seems to accord with the statement above that the link with Britain may fade and so be less strong for the younger generations who have not lived through the British empire or its recent aftermath.

A host institution academic summed up the situation:

> "I think it is very clear that the students want a foreign degree, from well-established countries like the UK and Australia. From the 1970s until now. And we have been influenced by the British education system and now part of the Commonwealth. So, the UK was a very popular destination back in the 80s and 90s and is still one of the top preferred destinations. But during the financial crisis of 1998 a lot of focus was on Australia because the costs of studying there were much cheaper. So, during this crisis a lot of the movement went to Australia" (H1).

5.3.5 Choice of institution

A number of students progressed to the franchise degree from either the college Foundation programme (a pre-honours degree preparatory programme) to year one or a Diploma programme that allows advanced progression to year two of the franchise programme. The parents and the influence of the family on these two college programmes is, therefore, very important for the college. As one host academic said, "We all have repeat customers" (H2), meaning that a number of students progress through the college from a number of levels and they are an important part of their education market. This was also acknowledged as important by a sending institution academic:

> "So I think for us that is why it is important to work with an established partner like (*host institution*) because in a lot of cases the students that come to us will have been on feeder courses at (*host institution*), diploma, foundation, and so on working their way through the (host institution) system so it is a logical thing for them to stay on and continue their HE career with (*host institution*)" (S1).

Students and their parents seemed to take account of a number of factors in the choice of institution and programme. In all the focus groups employability was one of the key factors. A typical response from students was as shown below:

Researcher	"So, going back to one of the original questions of why choose (*host institution*/*sending institution*), was the employer engagement important as well in the decision making? Did you know that there was real emphasis by (*host institution*/*sending institution*) on employer engagement before you came"?
FG6B	"Yes, yes, that's why I came – one of the key factors why I chose studying at (*host institution*) and (*sending institution*). I asked my friend studying at the *(…university)* and they did not have much employer engagement. They only study based on books".

Students talked about how important the availability of the Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) was to them in their decision making. The SAP is an opportunity to study on the same programme for a semester but at the sending institution in the UK. As an example, one diploma student talked about the franchise having a SAP, so the chance to go abroad:

> "I wanted a degree, I was here doing the diploma, so yeah, once I was done with the diploma I enrolled on BSc (*sending institution*) because the prospectus was good and we had this 3 + 0 collaboration which is awesome and they also have a semester abroad programme like for one semester where you can go abroad. It was very inviting" (FG3A).

One first year student talked about why he chose the host and sending institutions. He was unusual in all the groups of students as he was able to articulate his reasons for his choice of institutions and programme. He gained a diploma from the host institution and was looking to progress to higher education:

> "To be honest (*host institution)* wasn't my first choice, I had a lot of other options, due to my experience and my diploma from (*host institution)*. As a class we were quite happy with a lot of things here in terms of lecturers, the management and how they actually assess us so when I was thinking of continuing my degree I was also thinking of *(….university*). The first reason I went to (*host institution)* I want the quality and standards, standards not in terms of academic wise also like standards with the culture and the lecturer so I met up with the Dean of the other site and they told me about *(….university*.) I also talked to friends who studied there for a degree they all

have problems with standards and I was looking for a UK qualification so it left me with *(….university)* and (*host institution)* but when I realised (*host institution)* offers better opportunities for students whereby employment opportunities, there is Study Abroad programme like she says and there is also twin programme, 2 + 1? And of course the price is much more reasonable and also realised their ranking, the collaboration with *(….university)*, their ranking is very different so I realised ok higher ranking but what happens if I go there and all I get is book theory, I'm not going to get the proper skills you need so in the end I just came back to (*host institution*) because diploma option is progression and I can get discount for students" (FG3E).

This student looked at a range of issues including continuity of his experience at the host institution, quality and standards, employment opportunities, access to SAP, cost and discounts. This was a relatively rare occurrence that a student talked about a range of issues in their decision making.

Another student, shown below talked about the importance of a Western badge when gaining a UK degree, but he also talked about the learning experience being more important to him. He said:

FG2B	"I mean at the end of the day, different students place different kinds of priorities throughout their learning experience, I mean um, I would be lying if I say it like that perhaps the badge is not important at all and that's not important, but for me it's also the learning process because that's why I checked the curriculum that's offered here first in comparison to the rest because that matters much more to me".
Researcher	"So, the piece of paper, the badge is important, but actually the learning experience is important for you as well".
FG2B	"Yes".

A few students did talk about other things like the curriculum or learning and teaching being the most important things in their decision-making process, but these were the exceptions. Most students talked about the badge of western degree being the most important thing. However, there was one student who chose a UK sending institution on the basis of his football team. He said, "I haven't been to the UK. I knew about the UK because of the football club I started to support about 2006 - Manchester United. (*Students talk a little about football*)" (FG1E).

5.3.6 Brand, image and reputation

From the discussion with students and staff, it appeared, not unsurprisingly, that students and their parents knew much more about the host institution and its brand, image and reputation than the sending institution before they made their choice of where to study.

The Glossary describes the two rating systems in Malaysia (SETARA and MyQUEST). I was told that the host institution currently has an outstanding rating for MyQUEST (6 stars), and a very good rating for SETARA (Tier 4). A host academic told me:

> **"**We put a lot of emphasis, not so much on rankings, but on ratings. I am sure you have heard of MyQUEST and the SETARA. And the ratings done by MQA. So, parents are a little bit more aware that Malaysia as a whole is trying to put itself being recognised in terms of a high-quality education" (H1).

The same host academic went on to talk about the long standing reputation of the host institution gained over many years and how well known it is by parents in Malaysia:

> "Now in the past (*host institution*) has a reputation to close on 40 years in being in the industry itself so it is a well known name by parents in Malaysia. So, I think that contributes to the awareness that this is an option for private education and it is consistently in the top 10, and occasionally the top 5, so a long standing history of (*host institution*). In terms of (*sending institution*), I think the awareness is not very high" (H1).

A sending institution academic also told me about Malaysian ratings and how this was important to parents:

> "The partner in Malaysia is going to be important generally in terms of their own rankings because they have their own Malaysian rankings, SETARA and so on, and the six stars system I think, and I believe (*host institution*) is a six star institution, for example. So, they have the facilities, etc. this will be key to parents who are still key decision makers in the Malaysian context, as a good quality institution" (S1).

It seems clear from what host staff and students were saying that the most important thing was the brand, image and reputation of the host institution, not the sending

institution. So, for many students and their families the sending institution was not that well known or that important, except to say that it was a British institution. However, some students did ask questions about the sending institution and its ranking, as compared to competitor universities. A host academic, shown below, told me:

H3	"And reputation is also another matter. So generally British programmes in Malaysia are generally acceptable as high-quality programmes. So, this is why students like to study British programmes. I did some surveys and interviewed students and some of the students like to access library and VLE facilities which are offered by the (*sending institution*)".
Researcher	"Do you think students do a lot of homework searching for (*sending institution*) and checking perhaps online on rankings or whatever"?
H3	"Some students have said about the *(sending institution)* rankings but I should say especially some parents are asking us about the (*sending institution*) ranking compared to other universities in the UK. And then they can compare rankings and look at which Malaysian colleges and universities offer programmes with those universities".

The host academic did add a comment about parents in terms of whether they would carry out research about image reputation and ratings and for either the host and/or sending institutions. They said, "Yes, some of the parents, it depends on the family background. Those educated parents, so they actually research on the rankings of the UK university and they also look at which programme to apply to" (H3). The host institution academic also added, "Certainly there is a big selling power for (*host institution*) in having it as a franchise" (H3).

In many cases, students when discussing why they chose the sending institution, admitted that they had done little or no research about which sending institution they should go for or what programme. The choice of the host institution was much more important to them. One student, who typified this view, said:

> "I don't think it was very important. I didn't know (*sending institution*) at first. I came here to ask about the programme and then they say there is this programme in (*sending institution*). After that they did tell us about the ranking because some people think it is very important, some of my friends, and chose somewhere else. Because my father thinks it is better to study in

> UK, so I didn't think the ranking was very important and the ranking changes every year….." (FG4D).

In another focus group, shown below, there was a discussion about rankings with an exchange, below, between two students, where they talked about ranking as less important than how good the teaching is:

Researcher	"Was it important to look into that, to have a high ranking university"?
FG5E	"In my opinion I am not too bothered about that as long as the lecturer can teach well and there will be jobs for us at the end".
Researcher	"So, the rankings were less important"?
FG5D	"For me, less important".

A sending institution academic talked to me, about whether students asked questions about the image and reputation of the sending institution. Students and parents they saw (and they were cautious not to say all students and parents thought this) did not ask questions about the image of the sending institution, but were more interested in the course itself along with possible opportunities to study and work in the UK. They told me:

> "They don't really talk about the image, but they would ask questions on what is it about (*the sending institution*), why would we go to (*the sending institution*)? They are very interested in the content of the course, what is exactly in the course. I think, although this may be selective now, because they get channelled to me when I am at these events, but the opportunities to study in the UK. And even working in the UK. These things come up quite a lot, but it may be that they are just asking me because I am the British representative. But yes, that is what I get asked a lot" (S3).

Although employers were not directly involved in this research, it appeared from listening to staff, that employers did place a high regard for a Western degree. For example, a host institution academic told me:

> "I have talked to students and they say the interviewer asks them about *(sending institution)*. The *(host institution*) branding has been established for many years throughout Malaysia so they are aware of *(host institution)*. So, most students I talked to said employers asked about *(sending institution)*. So, what have they learned and stuff like that. So, for most employers they hear about a UK degree and it mostly has caught their attention. Right now, there is a shortage of graduates" (H2).

As part of a rebranding at the host institution, a host institution academic explained how this was going to be a long-term project:

> "That was the reason why we split the School. It will be a long uphill struggle to rebrand the School as (*the sending institution*). It comes down to what activities the students are doing. So, we try to do as many joint events as possible, that is the starting point. It will be a long process to sell (*the sending institution*) and at the corporate levels of (*the host institution*)" (H1).

5.3.7 Value for money and affordability

From listening to students and staff, value for money and affordability played a significant role in where students eventually study. Students talked about their aspiration to study abroad but realistically they knew this was not possible in their cases so chose a foreign degree programme based in Malaysia. students talked about satisfying this ambition of going abroad when they graduate by working abroad or studying for a postgraduate qualification in another country. Although not being able to afford studying abroad was an issue, no student seemed upset about this but realistic and understood the financial pressures on their parents. A final year student said, "I want to go overseas to the UK, but I cannot afford it so getting a UK certificate in Malaysia is very good enough for me" (FG3D).

Two second year students below, discussed about going abroad to study and the issue of finance by saying:

FG5B	"For me I wanted to go to Australia to study a degree but in the end my parents had financial problems, so I came to (*sending institution*). The price is affordable, and it is really local".
FG5C	"For me, because of financial issues, I prefer to stay in (*host institution*) to take my degree but I more prefer to do marketing and event management, but my parents can't afford it and I just chose the business admin course to cover everything and come out for work then and get a job".

Some students talked about discounts they had received for continuing their studies with the host institution. In particular, students who were originally studying on the foundation or diploma programmes could gain discounts on their fees which they found very attractive. For instance, a first year student said:

> "They gave me a discount on my fees. So, for last year I got a 30% discount on the foundation programme and then because I continue my studies at *(the host institution)* they locked my fees for the whole programme. So, they give me the same fees for this year because I continue my studies here" (FG4A).

However, affordability and value for money seemed, from the data, to be linked with price sensitivity, culture and the importance of family aspirations, and the need for a quality product of a Western degree. A host academic made these points by stating:

> "It depends on the geographical location and the consumers are much more price sensitive. And most definitely value for money is very important for most parents. But again, we need to position ourselves in terms of the *(sending institution)* programmes. And I believe that the positioning of the *(sending institution)* programme is not too expensive. So even if the cost was to be increased, I believe there is still a market for it. The important thing is the quality" (H2).

From listening to the students, many have aspirations to study abroad for the whole programme or for part of the programme. However, the students on the franchise programme did decide in the end, mainly for financial reasons, to study in Malaysia but with the option of studying part of their degree abroad. However, for most of the students they could not afford to study even part of their programme abroad.

In a discussion with second year students, shown below, concerning student exchanges, study tours and the Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) at the sending institution, students did want to take part in them, but the costs were prohibitive for them:

FG5C	"I am actually thinking about it, but the currency is too high at the moment (*others nod*). The economics in Malaysia is getting worse, the exchange rate".
Researcher	"But is that something you would have like to have done if you could afford it"?
FG5C	"Sure (*everyone agrees*)".
Researcher	"And what about the study tour"?
FG5C	"Yes, there is one this coming September or October".
Researcher	"Again, is that something you all have considered"?
FG5B	"I saw the prices (*she is animated*) and…(*others agree that prices are high*)".

Researcher "So, it is something you would like to do but really the cost is prohibitive for you"?
FG5B "Yes (*and others agree*)".

Interestingly, in speaking to a sending institution academic, they found that when talking to students on an individual basis, most had intentions to study at the sending institution, but when asked in class not many admitted to this. They told me:

> "I've also asked the question in front of the whole class of how many of you would like to study in the UK. Or work in the UK. And usually I might get one or two hands in the air. Is it because they are shy and most sit there wanting to come? If you speak to them on a more one to one situation they all seem to want to come. But if you ask a whole class, not many will say they want to come. Are we getting self-selecting groups who are coming to talk to us? Is it only those who talk to us who want to come to the UK? It would be difficult to unpick" (S3).

However, there were some students who could afford travel to the sending institution. I was told by one sending institution academic (S3) that in 2017, there were approximately 90 students who came to the host institution to study on the final year, for the SAP, or on a one week study tour. This, they confirmed, amounts to about 10-12% of all the final year franchise students at the host institution.

This sending institution academic also told me that out of many students that they had seen, only one student had told them that they did not want to study in the UK:

> "The thing is that Malaysia's economy is growing so there are lots of opportunities for them at home. I have only ever had one student say to me, no, I am not interested in the UK at all, I only did this course because it was the next one at (*host institution*). So, I know that view does exist" (S3).

Most students stay in Malaysia on the franchise programme, although many had original aspirations to travel to the UK to study. The opportunity for study abroad on the franchise programme is, therefore, a very good marketing tool. A sending institution academic told me:

> " …..it is a good marketing message. It's like here about 90% of the students say they are going to do a placement or study abroad but it never happens. You never get those numbers but if you had marketed it saying they couldn't

have a placement then it would affect your numbers, so it is a free gift as a marketing trick really" (S2).

5.3.8 Convenience

Convenience, and in some cases inertia, were important issues for some students in choosing their college and programme. Some students had come through the foundation or diploma routes onto their HE programme, and they said that it was then natural that they stay and progress to an HE programme at the same college. They mentioned about having friendship groups as well as knowing and liking many of the lecturers. In a sense, they felt safe by staying at the same college. For many, they could continue living at home, but some were happy to go on living in college or private accommodation close to the college. A conversation between the Researcher and two students shown below, typifies what some of the students said:

FG1A	"Because I did foundation at (*the host institution*) so I continued at (*the host institution*)".
Researcher	"You took the foundation. Why continue? Were there good reasons for staying at (*the host institution*)"?
FG1A	"I was familiar with the environment already and didn't want to change".
Researcher	"Presumably you knew all the lecturers, the college. What about anybody else? Why (*the host institution*)"?
FG1B	"Value for money. My mum wanted me to transfer to another university to complete my degree, but I'd been here two years and it's been home. It's not easy to change so I decided to stay at (*the host institution*)".

Students also had a choice of which programmes as well as which franchising university. Travel arrangements and parking conditions were mentioned by some students. For instance, one student talked about convenience but complained about the lack of parking facilities around the college. He said, "…for me, because convenient for me to come here.… Parking is my main issue" (FG2C).

Some other students talked about how to get to the college. A typical conversation shown below, was:

Researcher	"So, was location important"?
FG5B	"It is quite convenient to get to (*others agree about their situation as well*). We can take the train here".

Researcher	"So, convenience and knowing where the trains are, was important to everyone"?
FG5B	"Yes (*others agree*)".
Researcher	"And that was also important once you had completed your diploma, the convenience and access to transport"?
FG5A	"Yes (*all agree)"*.

One of the students from the pilot focus group also talked about the choice of going to the Kuala Lumpur (KL) central city campus or the out of city campus and the reasons for her choice. She said, "Because it's close to my house. If I choose (*host institution*), I had a choice to go to either Subang campus or KL campus. But KL is really jammed because it's a capital city. I wouldn't want to travel into KL" (P2).

5.3.9 Employability and career opportunities

Staff at the host and sending institutions told me that the host institution has remained at the forefront in ensuring the employability and job-readiness of its graduates and maintains close ties with leading companies that enable students to gain invaluable experience through their talks, workshops and employer projects. The host institution, I was told, has also an established Industry Advisory Board (IAB) that call upon active and influential leaders in the business industry to advise on curriculum design and course delivery.

I was told by a host institution academic (H1) that in their Graduate Employability Survey 2016, 99% of host institution graduates are employed within 6 months of graduation; 83% host institution graduates are paid higher than the market average; 43% of host institution graduates get job offers before they graduate. The sending institution, I was told by a sending institution academic (S1), has a reputation for employability and graduate success which is why, in part, the two institutions are in partnership, and why the franchise programmes are attractive to students.

This reputation for graduate employability is, therefore, a key reason why students want to study at the host institution. A typical comment from students is summed up by a second year student:

> "For me I went to the public exhibition at (*the host institution*) and looked at the courses and the price. Then after that I thought (*the host institution*) was

the best choice for me. And I came to study here after my diploma only because I know (*the host institution*) focuses on employability" (FG5E).

Other students talked about what they value most about studying at the host institution. In a typical discussion, shown below, employability was a key part of what they valued and why they had chosen to study there:

FG5B	"The knowledge and the focus on employability".
Researcher	"So, employability is really a key thing for you (*lots of nods*)".
FG5B	"Yes (*all agree*)".
Researcher	"How does that come out? Do you do projects, for instance? Or do you get employers coming in"?
FG5C	"They provide career talks and get some companies to come in to give careers talks".

The pilot students were asked, what were the best things about studying on the programme at the host institution and they said below:

P1	"First it's the structure. Second, in *(host institution)* we are very famous for projects, which I really like. But, when I come to the UK, I didn't get employers' projects. They ring companies".
P2	"Then, you assign students to the task, like. How do you solve this problem? And then you go to the company, and you present it to the employers".
P1	"So, that's a very high chance of getting employed. But when I come to UK…..".
P2	"It's more class-based. I don't see any…".
Researcher	"So, it's very theoretical"?
P1	"Yes, mostly. I don't get to see managers to solve employers' or companies' cases. It's very different".

In a final year student focus group, students were also asked about what was most important about studying at the host institution (shown below). Employability was again a key advantage that students talked about. The link to employers, employer projects, practical not just theoretical, and being exposed to employers whilst studying were very important to them. This was a common view across all students in the focus groups and across years:

FG6A	"It is because it is something like a polytechnic school and can learn things more than just theories, can have hands on experience, like we are having some events at (*host*

institution). I think it is something like linking with employers. Most of my assignments involve primary research, needing to go out to talk to employers to get some information for us to complete the assignment. So, it is something like experience rather than just search on line".

FG6E "At (*host institution*) we have workshops with employers during careers week so our lecturers ask us to go to the workshops and write a review journal. So, we have to be focussed in the workshops and then we can learn".

FG6D "So, most of the workshops are to do with interview skills, skills on writing CVs, which I think benefits for future careers".

FG6B "And the case brought from the employer is the real case. And it is totally different from what we read from the theory. They will always share their experiences with us. So, it is quite interesting".

Researcher "Do the employers come in as well to listen to your employer projects when you have completed them"?

FG6A "Yes, and we can directly comment with the employer".

FG6C "We present in front of them".

FG6E "And we provide our ideas".

FG6D "We explain our plans, our activities, our events and then we need to present to them and then they will choose the best ideas. After that we need to present again our progression".

A host academic reinforced the importance of employment and employability when they told me, "……but I think the key word right now is employability" (H2). A sending institution academic also told me how important employability was to parents when they said, "Absolutely, and that is another question from parents, in particular, ask. So, they sit down and ask what jobs can they get afterwards? How employable are they?" (S3).

The importance of a Western degree to employers and student employment was discussed. Although employers were not part of this research, the perception was from listening to host institution academics, that employers did value Western degrees when employing graduates. Host institution academics stressed that employers were keen on students who had job experience on their degrees. One host institution academic said:

> "Actually, I have had a chance to speak to some employers about 3 months ago and when they see a foreign degree especially from the UK students are often given priority for interviews and because of the (*host institution*)

branding. But more importantly from the foreign branding they are getting. So, the franchise programme as well as the franchisee has a role to play" (H2).

Another host institution academic thought that employers did look at both the host institution and the sending institution when a student applied for a job. They told me, "Yes, definitely. I always ask my students when they apply for internships or jobs they should mention the programme is a collaboration between (*the host institution*) and (*the sending institution*) because the employer looks at the partner university as well" (H3).

5.4 Learning and teaching

This theme relates to style and culture of learning, teaching and assessment between the UK and Malaysia as percieved by students (and staff) and the support given to students by both institutions. The themes and subthemes are shown in Table 5.1 above.

5.4.1 Teaching styles

No student raised as an issue the standard of teaching on the franchise programmes and the support they got from the host institution staff (but an issue with part-time lecturers was raised and is reported on later). However, students talked about how it would have been useful if there could have been some teaching by the sending institution (there is no formal teaching by the sending institution on this franchise programme in Malaysia). Over half of students felt that there would have been a real difference between the Malaysian style of teaching and a Western style of teaching and some students talked about what these differences might have been. For instance, some students in their final year, shown below, talked about the different culture of teaching in Malaysia and what they thought a Western style of teaching may be. Although happy with the Malaysian style of teaching they thought it would be good experience to be exposed to a Western style of teaching as well:

FG6B "They would have brought different teaching styles and because we grew up in Malaysia so we're already used to and confined to this type of education system and a lot of us have this way of thinking which is a very good thing and also I believe the Malaysian lecturers have a wealth of experience to

	share and their knowledge, so yeah but it would be still good to have other lecturers as well".
Researcher	"Do you think by studying here at (*host institution*) that you are getting the same or similar kind of experience, the cultural experience as if you went on a Semester Abroad Programme"?
FG6D	"I think it will be a bit different because of the culture, sometimes we have a Malaysian style of doing things".
FG6E	"A study difference like in class, I think a bit different maybe".
Researcher	"Say a little bit more about the study culture, is that the way you are taught by lecturers? Is that different do you think? Is there a Malaysian way of doing things"?
FG6E	"Yes, I think so".
FG6D	"Yes
Researcher	"Give some examples, how might it be different?"
FG6D	"I have heard from some of my friends that they can choose not to attend lecture classes but that they should go for the tutorial classes in the UK. But here we are supposed to go to all classes but some of the people don't go to the tutorial. And you can come in and go out".
FG6B	"But here actually both class and tutorial are compulsory. They take an attendance".

Interestingly, in this student exchange, the only example these students could give in terms of the difference was about the need to attend or not classes. Although some students would have liked a Western style of teaching it was not easy for them to articulate exactly what this may be like in practice. However, these final year students, shown below, were able to identify what the differences might be between Malaysian and Western style teaching:

FG6A	"Yes, a good idea (*All agree).* Because the experiences and culture we would get we would learn more from them rather than just local lecturers from Malaysia".
Researcher	"What do you think might be different"?
FG6E	"I think the way they each would be different and the way they engage with students. Because some of the lecturers only sit there and talk, talk, talk. They don't have any engagement with students. I believe the engagement with students will help the students to learn better".
FG6A	"And interaction (*Nods from others*). I think the way that they prepare their notes would also be different".
FG6B	"The slides they show".

The key difference, they thought, would be in how lectures were delivered. Rather than just sitting listening to the lecturer teach they thought Western lecturers would have much more engagement and interaction with students.

Some second year students, shown below, discussed how having a different experience would be interesting and how they could then compare styles and quality. They said:

FG2A	"Instead of just local lecturers it would be nice to have foreign lecturers, we, uh, yeah, the style of teaching would be different…..".
FG2D	"We would want to compare, we would want the experience of how is (*sending institution*) teaching".
Researcher	"Would it be interesting to have that kind of Western style"?
FG2D	"And then we could compare the quality of this is how (*sending institution*) lecturers in the UK they teach, and this is how our lecturers teach".
FG2B	"Yeah".

Some first year students, shown below, when they were discussing whether there were different teaching styles between Malaysia and the West, had a more definite view.

Researcher	"Do you think there's a kind of Western way of teaching"?
FG1A	"Yes, definitely".
Researcher	"Is there a Malaysian way of teaching"?
FG1C	"There is, yes".
Researcher	"Say a bit more about that".
FG1C	"In my exams, honestly, I watch lectures from internet, on YouTube from Western lecturers. That's all I can say…..*(He laughs)"*.
Researcher	"What do you think the differences are? What are the key differences? So, if you had a Western lecturer, from the UK and a lecturer here in Malaysia, what do you feel the differences are between how they teach"? *(Silence for a while)*
FG1C	"Clarity".
FG1B	"So, I saw some UK lecturers, like how they teach on the internet and maybe the difference is how they related the information, most of the UK ones, like they get straight to the point, like they know, they know which part to focus on. Like in Malaysia, they just cover everything on the board, so maybe that's the difference".
Researcher	"Ah, OK, so… they are very directed, Western lecturers are very directed"?
FG1B	"They focus on what is the most important point. Malaysian lecturers they want to make sure the student understands everything that is in the slide so some parts less in detail".

Some students felt the Malaysian style of teaching was didactic and there was little if no engagement with students in class. Two final year students, shown below, when discussing this, said:

FG6B "Some lecturers stand there and don't really teach us but some lecturers do engage with us".

FG6C "But I think my lecturers it will depend. It will depend on the topic".

A second year student agreed with this view of Malaysian teaching styles when he said:

> "It's like, when we are in class, Malaysian style is like the teacher's is standing in the front and talking and the students are, basically, zero response we don't bother and then when we try to ask questions our assignments we got back because our lecturer said you shouldn't ask the lecturers about assignments, it was like okay fine, we were not allowed to ask about assignments…" (FG2C).

Although not part of the main research, it was interesting to go back to the pilot study and students who were completing their final year in the UK with the sending institution and so experiencing Western teaching. These students acknowledged that there were different styles of teaching but the key difference they identified, having experienced both styles, was the emphasis on critical thinking skills. One of the students said:

> "I think it's harder here. Because there are like different styles of teaching in Malaysia and in the UK. Because I've noticed in the UK, the lecturers focus a lot on like critical thinking. In Malaysia, it's like, just look up under research, what they say and then just let me know... We are not really trained on critical thinking" (P2).

The students from the pilot study also identified a further difference between Malaysian and UK styles of teaching, that of less help given to students in the UK. In discussion, shown below, they said:

Researcher "So, here at (*sending institution*), you get less help, in that sense".

P2 "Yeah. I think, it's less help. I just feel there are lots of things I have to learn from experience, like such as from failure, so that's where I pick up and improve on the next project".

P1 "In Malaysia, it's more like spoon feeding by the lecturers. You can just show them an assignment. They will actually look at it, like paragraph from paragraph and tell you if you are on the right track".

However, they did not have a comparison of being taught at final year level in Malaysia and it may have been different insofar as students were expected to be more independent learners at that level so less direct support as before may have been less forthcoming.

In talking to staff at the host and sending institutions about whether and how good practice could be exchanged, a sending institution academic was honest about how, from the sending institution's point of view, this did not really happen. He could not think of an example of good practice that had been used from the host institution by the sending institution. They talked about sitting in on a learning and teaching session at the host institution on one of his visits and said:

> "I am struggling right now to give you an example and I think that is a damn shame because there is a lot of good practice that happens. I sat in on a learning and teaching session in Subang, a lunch time thing. The lecturers pitched up, they do the same things here, and people share their learning and teaching. And we just had lunch, and they were chatting about learning and teaching things. And I thought, gosh, there is a lot of stuff that is happening here, but it is not being recorded or taken back. And I thought we could have a joint session, although there would be different time zones, where we could discuss things together. But in terms of bringing things back we have been very poor with that, and it is a shame I think" (S1).

On the other hand, from listening to two of the sending institution academics (S1 and S2), the flow of advice from the sending institution to the host institution is constant, partly because of the quality assurance and standards responsibility, but often because of the feelings of superiority that the sending institution has. In talking to this sending institution academic, the conversation went further to discuss whether the problem of not taking back good practice was about a neo-colonial attitude:

> "Yes, and I think we could learn a lot from learning and teaching and their approaches. Or just the conversations which can be quite illuminating. If there is a 'to do' that we haven't done it is definitely bring something back into our own practice. Generally speaking, most folks find the imperialist thing an anathema. And steer well away from it. I'm not saying it doesn't happen, but I don't think it happens as much as it used to do. So, I think we can say in most cases that is dead in the water, but we haven't quite crossed the bridge and said so now let's take something back from the experiences in Malaysia. We haven't made that journey yet. And I'm not sure why, actually. But we haven't" (S1).

From what they were saying, there seemed to be more work and thought needed on this by the sending institution.

5.4.2 Part-time lecturers

The use of part-time lecturing staff and their standard of teaching were frequently mentioned by students in all years in their focus groups. A number of students talked about the part-time lecturers not having enough experience of how to teach as well as the number of part-time lecturers they had teaching them over the length of their programme. Below, shown below, is a typical conversation between final year students acknowledging that their full-time lecturers are good but there are issues with part-time lecturers:

Researcher	"What about lecturers"?
FG6A	"Yes, they are good".
FG6B	"Some lecturers are good, but the part-time lecturers don't have enough experience. Even in year two and three I am still taught by part-time lecturers".
FG6C	"Yes, even on my last semester I am taught by two part-time lecturers".
FG6D	"And I still have part-time lecturers".
FG6A	"And they are not really aware of *(sending institution)* processes, how *(sending institution)* works".
FG6E	"They also don't know how to access Blackboard, it's ok *(but sighs*) but they don't have enough experience about teaching (*general agreement*)".
Researcher	"So, don't know enough about (sending institution) processes and don't know enough about using Blackboard, and about how to teach"?
FG6E	"They don't know how to teach and cannot advise us on using *(sending institution VLE").*
FG6B	"Some part-time lecturers have teaching experience, so that is ok, but some come from corporate organisations and this is their first-time teaching".

The part-time lecturers' supposed lack of experience also extended, many students said, to them not knowing about the sending institution's processes such as moderation and how the sending institution's VLE should be used. Some students also talked about part-time lecturers not knowing enough about the host institution's use of Blackboard. As these programmes are franchises, not knowing fully what the sending institution's processes are, and so not being able to advise students about them was seen by some students as a real problem. For instance, a group of second year students, shown below, said when discussing this issue:

FG2B	"Yes, for us it's part-time lecturers actually for us because when we do our work and when we further question them, sometimes they don't even know what they are teaching to us".
FG2C	"They are just teaching us by the book".
FG2E	"Yeah, they are following by the book, they read exactly what's on the slide and done".
FG2D	"One of my friends who studied in marketing, teach as part time lecturer. The part time lecturer is teaching in front and like he don't know how to pronounce the word so he jump because nobody is focussing on it and the syllabus is only last term I took the subject, but this time is another lecturer who taught part-time, so the syllabus or the checklist audit is total different".
FG2A	"Their main problem is that they are part time they don't get enough resource or help from the college itself, so they cannot give us because they just know, they just say Ah, we are just limited on resources so deal with it yourself or things like that".
FG2B	"I think the whole idea the whole bigger problem with the whole idea of employing part-timers is it's falls down to them…the cliché everyone can do it but not everyone can teach it, because teaching is a whole different game, you know, as much as someone might have 20 years' experience, doesn't mean they can teach a class of 20, you know, it's a whole new different game".

In talking to host institution academics, there was an acceptance that students did have a point. One host institution academic, shown below, was quite open about having some bad part-time lecturers in the past and the challenges that management at the host institution faced:

H1 "In some cases, they are right. We have had some pretty bad part-time lecturers in the past. What generally happens is that we are not given sufficient time to employ lecturers sometimes. It really is about resource management at (*host institution*) itself. I have worked elsewhere and resource management. (*Host institution*) is not the best as they only give us two months to start the process. This is an organisational structure issue at this institution. Previously I had a one year resource management plan, not two months. So, in my business plan, I say I have an increasing number of students, but they give me limited time to recruit".

Researcher "Do a number of your part-time lecturers work for you regularly? Or is there lots of movement"?

H1 "In the past we used to have them stay, but now they come and go. It is a structural and a management issues which are very difficult to resolve. Sometimes we just need to get somebody in, even though they may not be as good. We try not to give a lot of work to part-time lecturers but sometimes this is difficult. And we have to pay premium rates. We are now down to just three part-time lecturers now".

Researcher "Do you give any training to part-time lecturers? Mentoring or lecturer training programme? Can they access any of that"?

H1 "They are paid on an hourly basis. It is really about finding the right fit and it is not always easy when they are part-time".

Although there are only a limited number of part-time lecturers teaching on the programmes at the moment at the host institution, this issue highlighted organisational and management issues in terms of planning ahead and recruitment of staff in a difficult employment market. Even though they pay what the host institution calls premium rates, I was told by host institution academics that it is not always easy to get the right calibre of staff in terms of teaching experience.

Another host academic agreed that there had been some issues with part-time lecturing staff but said that measures were being put in place to support these staff such as them having a mentor:

> "Yes, we have such problems especially engaging newcomers to lecturing, with teaching the first time on (*sending institution*) programmes. But right now, we have put in a few measures. We have a teaching and learning team and on top of that what happens is the moment they join they are assigned to a mentor who will sit in his or her class. And also, this part timer will get a chance to sit in the mentor's class to see how we actually deliver our teaching. We can only see the results at the end of this year but prior to that this is something was an ongoing issue when it comes to support. Our lecturers perhaps have given students a bit too much support. And so, students expect

> the same support from part-time lecturers and this is where the problem comes in" (H2).

The host institution academic also raised the point about full-time lecturing staff giving, perhaps, too much support to students and that part-time lecturers were not able to do this so much as they only attended the college for certain days which the students missed and therefore, they told me, sometimes complained about.

5.4.3 Access to and availability of staff

Students were happy with access to and availability of Malaysian lecturing staff to support them. Students talked about how friendly lecturing staff were and a significant minority of students talked about having the same lecturers from their foundation or diploma programmes, so the lecturing staff knew their names and backgrounds which they found helpful. Students also talked about how small classes at the college suited them and so it gave them a chance to talk to lecturers in and outside class. Some students talked about staff giving the class their e-mail addresses and mobile telephone numbers in case they had queries and some discussions in the focus groups revolved around how long it took to get a response from lecturers. In most cases, responses seemed to be quick, perhaps within 24 or 48 hours and so students had nothing but praise for staff. Students also talked about being able to make appointments and see staff. However, this was for full-time staff only, and the view from most students that have access to, and availability with, part-time staff was restricted, although there were a few students who had a more positive attitude towards part-time staff and their availability.

Students from the pilot study were able to compare the support they got from their college in Malaysia lecturers and their UK lecturers. One student talked about the host institution and then the sending institution. She said:

> "It's a bit smaller so we get attention of the lecturers more often, so we can refer to them like more comfortably. Compared to here, there are hundreds of students. So, the Lecturers sometimes may not remember you. So, we have to book like appointments to see them personally. I find what's different is the approach. In (*host institution*), you can just go up to the office and say I need help in these parts and they are really willing to help you. But over here, it's slightly different" (P1).

She then went on to talk about the difficulties she encountered at the sending institution:

> "At first, it's very difficult for me. In the previous Semester, I had an assignment I had to do. I feel like it's not really correct. So, I had to approach one of my Lecturers. He doesn't want to see my draft. Then, he told me what I'm doing is completely wrong. So, I have like another 3 days just to correct the whole piece of assignment. And I find it very, very difficult. Although he approved, he said some parts are correct, some parts are not correct. But my results like after that, it's not really that nice" (P1).

The perception from the students in the pilot was that there was less help given at the sending institution and one of the students said, "In Malaysia, it's more like spoon feeding by the lecturers. You can just show them an assignment. They will actually look at it, like paragraph from paragraph and tell you if you are on the right track" (P1).

A final year student at the host institution, however, was able to relate how teaching at the (*host institution*) had changed over the three years of the programme from spoon feeding, as he said, to more independent learning in the final year:

> "I can see this in my course because when I was in the first year on this programme a lecturer would be a bit spoon feeding. Will give the structure how to write the assignment. For example, go through the introduction, or something like that. So, I am in year three now, so the lecturer just gives us the question and explain the question. So, we have to read a lot of journals" (FG6D).

In terms of the support and access to lecturers at the home institution, students expressed positive views in what support they had had and how relatively easy and quickly it was to contact staff if they needed to. As an example of students discussing this, shown below, these final year students said:

FG3A	"There are some good lecturers here and support is good".
FG3B	"And you can find lecturers to help".
Researcher	"So, if you're doing an assignment and you're thinking actually I don't know how to do this, do you know, could you ring them or email them, or go somewhere"?
FG3A	"Within hours you can go to them and they act as a guide, but they don't generally do the work for you".

FG3B	"I would say my lecturers are good and most of the lecturers are also very good. Some of them are very dedicated lecturers, they are ready to help us, they know whether students are taking it seriously, and as long as you're serious about your studies most of them are very fair. There are just a small percentage of average lecturers. But a lot are excellent".
FG3A	"You can consult them during office hours".
Researcher	"How many hours a week do they have, sort of an hour, two hours, how many hours"?
FG3A	"Student: Mostly two hours".

5.4.4 Feedback and moderation

Part of the discussion in the student focus groups was about their assignments, marking and moderation of assessments. As this is a franchise, the moderation process (see Glossary) was frequently talked about. Some students knew that the sending institution had to verify the marks but there was little understanding of this part of the quality assurance process. As one second year student said, "We're not even sure what goes on during the moderation process" (FG2E).

This was, however, not particularly surprising. One of the host academics told me that:

> "It is absolutely striking that those who live in this world just assume that other people know what happens. They assume (*the students*) understand the vocabulary. I think if you asked those same questions to (*the home, UK)* students here I think you would get exactly the same answers because they have no idea" (S2).

He went on to say:

> "We need to explain, for instance about returning work in 4 weeks. The controls and checks which are good news for you because it means you can have more confidence. People don't bother with that, they just say it will be 4 weeks. If you took the trouble to explain that you would probably find students saying, take a bit longer if it means I get the mark I deserve which is really what I'm looking for. There is arrogance that people don't feel the need to do it. I can see that if you did that overseas you then have another angle which could complicate it. And also, you have the angle, we all play this game, playing people off against each other. It is not inconceivable, either. I certainly wouldn't say that is something I haven't heard about at home" (S2).

Most students were very concerned about moderation and the effects it might have on their marks. Students get marks from their lecturers but are warned that marks may alter after moderation and the exam boards. This is the same system as on the

UK franchise on the same programmes in the sending institution. Although I was told by sending institution academics that marks did not change very often after moderation, they did occasionally change at the exam boards. The host lecturers were aware that their marks may change and were therefore concerned at losing face in front of their students (see sub theme below – *Loss of face*).

A second year student made a point about moderation and part-time staff. He said:

> "It goes back to the whole lack of instruction because, um, part-timers, at least in my experience, a lot of them are not seasoned enough with the whole moderation process approval and setting and all these kinds of things and so they are really as much groping in the dark like us, like the students" (FG2B).

Students on the pilot study also talked about moderation and the possible effects on their marks. However, although scared that their marks may drop, they were positive about gaining a different perspective from different countries. They were given advice of "just keep calm" by their Malaysian lecturers. They said, shown below:

P2	"Because we enter a public university in Malaysia, a government university, so we will only be marked by Malaysian markers, so we don't get opinions from different countries. Our assignments are also regulated by the UK".
P1	"Yes, it's like, we have very different opinion from the UK and Malaysia".
P2	"Yes, we are very scared that our marks will drop. Or hopefully, that our marks will be raised a little bit".
Researcher	"Has that happened?"
P2	"Yes, some of my friends. Their marks have very dropped. It's very heart breaking to see"
Researcher	"So, I guess you are told your marks. But you are told they are not your final marks but that you have to wait for the moderation then the exam boards?"
P2	"I still remember my lecturer saying don't be afraid. Just keep calm".

A host academic talked about the cultural consequences of the sometimes lack of confidence of host academics in front of Western colleagues when they told me:

> "There is a tendency to fall back on over generous marking. It comes down to the confidence of the lecturer, not going back to say it is not my fault. I'll

> give you these marks but someone else needs to mark it. So, the lecturers say it is not our fault, it is somebody else's fault" (H1).

Another host academic thought this challenge was also about culture and the interaction of Malaysian and Western staff, and then how the moderation process is explained to students:

> "For me, I think it is more about the culture. Because in Asian countries, especially in Malaysia, we want things most immediate and here when we explain to them there are several processes we need to follow, especially about exam boards. They can't seem to understand, and they are not happy about the release of results when it can be 2 or 3 months. It's more a cultural understanding and also the way the information is conveyed to the students which has to be made much earlier. And sometimes knowing the fact that we are all Asians and Malaysians, and we highly regard our colleagues from (*the sending institution*), and we can be quiet. So, I think it is culture" (H2).

In their different ways, the host and sending institution academics came to the same conclusion about feedback and moderation, that the students need to be included in the conversation and the process clearly explained to them. But it seemed, from what I was told, that the reason this is not well understood by academics from both countries is a cultural one.

5.4.5 Feedback from students

A surprising finding that came out of this research was that of confidentiality and the use of student feedback questionnaires by the host institution. It was only discussed in one final year focus group, but the students in that group were very animated about it, as they perceived there to be to lack of confidentiality and possible consequences for them if they were negative in their feedback about lecturers. There is, on the franchise programme, a host institution feedback questionnaire after each semester. It is not administered or used by the sending institution, but part of the host institution's quality assurance processes. It is administered through Blackboard (see Glossary), but this group of students were very concerned about confidentiality, about their (negative) views getting back to lecturers and then the students who made negative comments being unfairly targeted. The following conversation took place (shown below):

Researcher	"At the end of each semester for each module, is there a questionnaire that they ask you to fill out about the module, how well the lecturer did, all the good things, all the things that could be improved?"
FG6D	"Yes. But I think the form we fill out for lecturers is not that confidential. I feel it could be leaked out so the lecturer will be like you told bad on me so I will be bad to you. That's why most of us do not give bad feedback in relation to the lecturers".
FG6E	"I agree".
Researcher	"So, you think you may get marked down. What does the questionnaire look like? Is it not anonymous?"
FG6A	"It is through Blackboard, so we think they can track it because of our student IDs (*General agreement*). Because we need to enter our student ID so maybe they can track us through the ID. So, I think it is better that the evaluation is done by (*sending institution*) which the management at (*host institution*) does not do".
Researcher	"Student feedback at (*sending institution*) is completely anonymous and the system is even taken away from lecturers, so the lecturers don't handle anything – so don't hand anything out or collect anything in".
FG6A	"We are worried that top management will leak out anything to lecturers. I have heard some cases from my friends they do it, and then lecturers say why do you want to study here then?"
Researcher	"So how have you heard about this? Has this happened at *(host institution)"?*
FG6A	"Yes, my friends have said so".
Researcher	"So, how do they know that has happened?"
FG6B	"Because the lecturers have been negative towards them".
Researcher	"The whole point of these surveys is that the student experience gets better and better and some lecturers may need help and support to improve. So, if none of that is happening then everyone is the loser".
FG6B	"So, if lecturers don't get support students may fail modules. That is a consequence (*Nods from other students*)".
Researcher	"At (*sending institution*) in the UK, anonymity and confidentiality are very important and adhered to. So, students know that the system is working. So, they can say anything they want".
FG6A	"But here we can't. So, we may get negative impacts. So, it is better for (*sending institution*) people to do the evaluation to go to top management at (*sending institution*)".
Researcher	"So, you would prefer if (*sending institution*) do it?"
FG6A	"So, the top (*host institution*) management are not involved and things cannot leak out. And they will only get feedback from (*sending institution*). It could be done through (*sending institution VLE)* rather than just relying on Blackboard".

No other group mentioned this issue, and as this was the last focus group to be held, it was not possible to ask if the students in the other focus groups held the same opinion. However, this group of students were very concerned about giving negative feedback about their lecturers because of the possible effects on them.

5.4.6 Group work

Some students talked about group work. Not unsurprisingly, some students did not like group work or did not like being in groups that were outside their friendship groups if picked by lecturers. Some students also talked about challenges of group work with international students in their group although it appeared that in some cases international students tended to stay in their own groups unless separated by the lecturers. A group of second year students, shown below, discussed this by saying:

FG5D	"They tend to group together with other international students. And then local students in groups".
Researcher	"So, who does that? Do lecturers organise that way or does it just happen?"
FG5A	"No, no students choose and that how it happens".
FG5E	"But sometimes international students are invited to join our groups".
FG5B	"But some lecturers prefer that international students must mix with local students".

One challenge mentioned by students was the language skills of some international students and difficulties of them fully working within a group situation. Interestingly, some students, when talking about this, were concerned for international students and their lack of fluency in the English language. An example of this was a discussion in a first year student focus group, shown below:

FG1C	"We do chat with them about their culture but there's one thing we have to mention does the China student take English in their country. English language is here for one year only, but they have to take the subject called English for distance study, I think they couldn't catch up and the group mix is a bit suffering".
Researcher	"So, you think their English is not so good and it slows things down.".
FG1C	"Yes, still cannot catch up, I mean English in one year cannot catch up with us".

Researcher	"So, does that have an effect on your learning, because they're a bit slower"?
FG1C	"No because the lecturer won't slow down because of the China students, they'll just go on it's not good for the Chinese students, it is a bit tough for them, it is too fast".
Researcher	"So, it's too fast for them, it's too slow for you….".
FG1C	"I'm an international student myself, technically I can be Malaysian because the culture is similar. Two semesters ago I had this English assignment with the Chinese students, I had complications with the Chinese students. They couldn't understand anything I said, so each word that came out of my mouth they opened Google translate". *(Students laugh)*
Researcher	"Is that difficult?"
FG1B	"My marks were really low. They are looking and copying and pasting from the Internet".
Researcher	"That's often a problem isn't it, if you can't speak or write the language, then the tendency is to plagiarise and go onto the web. So, for group work, would you, it sounds as though you try not to be in a group where there's some Chinese students because…" *(Students laugh)*
FG1G	"We don't mind helping them. But they have to be sufficient themselves".

First year students in another focus group, shown below, put a positive spin on group work with international students where they could learn from them culturally but also if they needed to support them in class, which they thought was a real advantage:

FG4A	"Yes, because their ideas can be very different. So, you get more, different ideas. And you can learn from them. But it is the language that is the problem. They are not good in expressing themselves as English is not their first language".
Researcher	"And are you always allocated international students to groups? Do you have any choice which group you can be in? Or does the lecturer choose? How does it work"?
FG4A	"I only have one subject that the lecturer allocates groups. And in that class, there are a lot of international students. So maybe the lecturer thinks because their English is not so good as the local students she makes a local student the leader allocating some international students to that group to help them".
Researcher	"I see. And is that the experience of everyone"?
FG4A	"Yes" (*Some agreement).*
FG4D	"But international students help me to improve my English. My friend is African, and I have learnt from him".
Researcher	"Right, so he has good English? So sometimes it is an advantage being with international students in a group. And what about allocating international students in academic

subjects"? (*The group work discussed above was in English classes*).

FG4D "I learnt accounting in my foundation programme, so I can be considered better than them. So, there are a lot of professional terms that they cannot easily pick up. And the lecturer teaches very fast, so it is kind of hard for them to pick up things. So, they ask us a lot of questions (*Laughs*) to catch up with the lecturer".

Researcher "If you almost have to help teach the international students does that help you in a sense, that you have to think through what the answers are anyway".

FG4D "Yes"

Researcher "So, perhaps there is an advantage there do you think"?

FG4D "Yes, in teaching them you can remember easier".

Researcher "So, you can clarify your thoughts and then express them"?

FG4D "So, you can arrange your thoughts in a proper way and then deliver it to them" (*Agreement from all*).

Researcher "Yes, yes. I really hadn't thought about this as a challenge".

FG4D "It is a challenge".

Researcher "But sometimes with a positive outcome"?

FG4D "Yes".

Other students talked about the advantage of having international students in their group. When asked whether international students brought a wider global experience to the group's interaction the final year students, shown below, agreed that it did:

Researcher "So, in thinking about how you get that wider global experience is it a good idea to have one or two international students in your group? Do you welcome that"?

FG6B "Yes".

FG6A "Because they will have different ideas".

FG6E "Better to have students from diverse backgrounds, because in discussions there are different ideas from them and us".

Researcher "So, you have good discussions with them".

FG6A "Yes, with most international students from China".

Researcher "You all work well together in your groups? So, they bring quite an interesting perspective, I guess"?

FG6A "Yes".

Another final year student in a different focus group got very animated when telling the group about his positive experiences with international students:

> "That is quite difficult because since they are new here and stuff they can be quite reserved, but I mean if you persuade them hard enough then yeah but it's really nice having them in the group because we get a lot of other and

different opinions and perspective. Especially, I have this class, English for Business so we were talking about taboos about how each country has taboos and stuff and we were discussing and exchanging opinions, it was really interesting to learn how they function because in each country they function in a different spectrum, right (*Student quite animated*)" (FG3D).

An issue that was raised by students in the pilot focus group related to academic English skills. These students, shown below, felt that there was a need to enhance their academic English skills, and that this had been highlighted when they came to the UK to study:

P1	"I think they are facing difficulties in terms of the English language. Because on a daily basis, we speak Malaysian English. The way they apply to their essays, it's not standard, it's not professional. I think we need more of professional English exposure. Me and my friends. As a whole".
Researcher	"So, in terms of writing academic English"?
P2	"Yes. I think it's very crucial".
Researcher	"Perhaps, do you think something we could improve upon to help students to study? Give perhaps more support in terms of expectations in writing? Is that what you are saying"?
P2	"Some of my friends. In terms of expressing, there are difficulties. How do I do this? …my friends, I can see they are really struggling with their work. Just to get a degree".
Researcher	"Has that been difficult when you came over here to do your final year, in terms of academic English in essays, reports".
P1	"At first year. The first 2 months yes. When I first receive my coursework. I didn't know how to transform my thoughts into my paper. So, I went to CASE (*an academic skills centre in the Business School*). The lady was kind enough. You've got to do this and this. But then, when I showed it to my lecturer, everything was wrong. So, I had 3 days to correct the whole thing. But also, lucky enough, the lecturer was kind enough. He actually broke down the whole thing. He actually taught me some techniques. I think what really matters is the techniques of essay writing. Because different lecturers have got different expectations on your work".

5.5 Behaviour

The theme of behaviour is categorised in the way in which a person acts toward others and the subsequent effects of culture on the behaviour of students (and staff) from both institutions. This theme highlights the importance of behaviour in explaining how the host students and staff react and how relationships are formed and conducted between the two institutions, and the subsequent effects on learning

and teaching at the host institution. The cultural significance of how people behave between the two societies of east and west and the importance of loss of face, deference, and quietness cannot be underestimated in these relationships. Table 5.1 sets out the behaviour theme and sub themes that will be presented.

A key finding highlights how relevant behaviour seems to be to the participants in this research and how Western education is perceived to be prestigious and how Western academics are perceived to be of a high-quality and should be highly respected by the host institution. Students spoke openly, and usually very positively, about their perceptions of a Western education and how they thought host and sending staff behaved. Host staff, on the other hand, were critical at times about how the sending staff behaved toward host staff generally and how this affected them and so sometimes the student experience. The data from this research also suggests that the sending institution staff interviewed were aware of their institution's sometimes negative behaviour on the host institution and know that it should be changed.

5.5.1 Loss of face

Loss of face appears to be an important cultural difference between Malaysia and the UK. From this research, loss of face can affect students as well as staff and if staff are affected by loss of face with their Western colleagues, then this can affect students and their experience. An example that was discussed with staff was that of the moderation process and the possible changing of marks of Malaysian lecturers. A sending institution academic explained what the issues were:

> "I think the problem there is because we are remote it is quite public. So why as we here, your external comes, the adjustment might be made before it gets to the board. And it is between you and that external. The problem with Malaysia is that it is quite public. Your Malaysian module leader possibly got as far as the board, in front of their colleagues, being told by a load of foreign people to change their marks. It is just so much more public" (S3).

To this academic's point of view, it was being told your marks were to be changed in public, in front of Malaysian and UK colleagues (with your Head of Programme present) and external examiners, at a formal exam board. This would not necessarily be easy for a UK academic to experience but for a Malaysian academic this would

appear to be very profound and difficult. This possible loss of face had some knock-on effects with some students discussing the fact that often marks were not given to them until after the exam board, some weeks after the module had finished to avoid loss of face of Malaysian lecturers in front of their students. A sending institution academic explained the quality assurance system and the loss of face he knew some Malaysian staff felt and experienced:

> "We have had problems with feedback not been given to students in some cases previously because the lecturer has said well I have got to wait until all the processes are completed which we have managed (*long pause*), stamped out I hope because in our regulations students can be given a provisional grade before the board has sat. But again, this is a cultural thing, that of saving face. If a lecturer in the UK gives a grade to a student and the board changes it, which again is unusual, but it may happen as part of the moderation process, I don't think the lecturer would feel too worried about it, and actually I don't think the students would feel too worried about it. In the Malaysian context, is very deferential to authority generally, especially to parents, and lecturers are authority figures. So, if I give you a grade and that is subsequently changed by somebody else there is an apparent loss of face because my decision making has been questioned. So, I think it would bother a Malaysian lecturer a lot more and it would then also, because the lecturer has lost face, the student would lose confidence in that authority figure. So, there is a cultural undertone to all of this as well" (S1).

Although, in practice, marks are not changed very much at exam boards, the possible loss of face felt by host institution academics if this did happen meant that students were mostly getting marks and feedback after the formal exam boards, so the host academics were protecting themselves.

One sending institution academic, however, saw this not only as loss of face but a game played by some lecturers to not give marks back to students. This sending institution academic also talked about how loss of face could be eased somewhat by the sending institution being honest and up front in explaining if marks needed to be altered. They said, "You don't need to dress it up or complicate it or bring in the imperial past. You have given them marks that are too high in my opinion can we discuss it. Then there is no room for misunderstanding" (S2).

Students talked about not getting marks or feedback in a timely fashion. Some students also said that lecturers had told them that they could not be given marks

back before the exam boards because of the sending institutions regulations. From listening to staff, this could be attributed to be about the possible effects of loss of face by the host institution academics.

Students also talked about loss of face as well. Some said that they felt uncomfortable in querying things with lecturers or answering questions in case they got them wrong. One first year student was asked about contacting lecturers or asking questions in class and she said, "I wouldn't feel comfortable and the class is pretty big" (FG1B). A number of students agreed with her view although there were students who did not raise this as an issue.

5.5.2 Quietness and deference

Quietness of staff and students is linked to loss of face above. Quietness and modesty were highlighted many times in my research with students and staff. Staff in particular were able to articulate this and confirm that in many instances this was down to their culture and backgrounds. A host academic talked about students being quiet and gave as a reason their cultural background. They gave an example when they first join the programme:

> "I always have believed when students sign up for the (*sending institution*) programme the orientation plays a very important role. But it goes back to individual students where they refuse to ask (*Laughs*) thinking this doesn't relate to me at all and a bit later we will see what happens. They have a mindset, and I think it is cultural as well. I think I won't ask but just keep quiet. It seems a little bit odd (*Laughs*)" (H2).

The same host academic talked about the host academics keeping quiet even though they had good practices they could pass on to the sending institution. Modesty in keeping quiet and their cultural background were reasons given. Interestingly, they mentioned that on sending institution visits there was always a lack of time so not always the space to share good practice, but he gave some useful advice, because of the Malaysian's modesty and quietness, the sending institution needs to be more proactive in probing host staff. They said:

> "(*The sending institution*) has good practices and so do we but again I think it goes back to the culture. We have good things, but we are modest. and we

> just keep quiet. So, it is a cultural thing. But mostly you are here for just a few days, so it is difficult to share. I think this is something we should explore but you need to do a lot more probing" (H2).

The probing that was mentioned above was supported by a member of the sending institution in the following exchange, shown below, with me:

S3	"Both, culture and language. So, we don't speak the same language. That is an assumption. They don't always understand the language. Some of the students tell me they don't understand me".
Researcher	"Is that because it is their second or third language"?
S3	"No, no, it is because their English is different from our English. And people are far too polite. Students often say but staff often won't. And culturally, yes, there is the Malaysian way to be friendly. And there are things going on that we don't know about. They won't necessarily tell us. They say everything is fine".
Researcher	"How can you resolve that"?
S3	"You have to know what questions to ask. Be prepared to have a bit of a dig. You have to know who to talk to. You have to respect that we will always be a visitor there and we will always be treated as a visitor….".

This sending institution academic felt that staff were more modest and quieter than their students and that because of this the sending institution needs to be prepared to ask the right questions and dig more. She also made the point that Malaysian English is often different from English English and so important messages can be lost in translation.

5.5.3 Relationships and attitudes

An animated discussion with a host institution academic helped reveal some of the challenges in partnership working, and the possible effects on the student experience. They said:

> "I think there is still a feeling of superiority because we are not as well established as the UK. But as we have worked along we know it is not perfect, right? But I think the majority of the people here follow the Asian culture of just keeping quiet. Not all, but we have had cases of visitors coming to show they are superior. Which they are not. It is the perception that people have. A lot of it is about personality and how things are viewed in that sense (*quite*

animated). Coming back to the Asian culture we just accept it, we might talk about it behind your backs" (H1).

They also went on to talk about an example of misunderstandings between the two cultures when setting and moderating an assessment. It related to a film and one of the characters being gay. The law in Malaysia on being gay is different to that in the UK which caused the issue. They said:

> "It is about the language, phrasing of a question, the information provided. I had one comment and I still remember it. It was about Beauty and the Beast and this was a huge issue in Malaysia. About gay content. It had a huge impact in Malaysia. It is the lack of awareness, no one in Malaysia would choose this topic" (H1).

They went on to talk about how this can impact on the relationship:

> "I think it is about understanding. They could not appreciate. A basic lack of openness to hear the stories on both sides. You can share the same problems, how you resolve things, and it takes time to build. You need people who can open up their eyes. We have some who say I'm right, you are wrong. It boils down to the people and who can see there are different ways of doing things and coming together in a joint process. It can feel that (*host institution*) staff's academic integrity is being attacked. So, we say I don't want any problems, so I will just agree with you rather than saying that is the style/way we want to do it. It can create a real feeling of tension. And then I don't like you as you have no respect for me. But I will do what you say because if my assessments don't get approved……" (H1).

One of the sending institution academics told me about how uncomfortable he sometimes feels in relation to the partnership working:

> "The way that colleagues speak to Malaysian colleagues sometimes makes me quite uncomfortable because sometimes they have some kind of weird imperial outlook. It always amazes me that colleagues who are ordinary academics in the UK as soon as they get on a plane get these airs and graces and I'm not quite sure where that comes from" (S1).

They went on to say:

> "And we get treated like that. If you go to Malaysia and come from the West you get treated very specially and it is quite easy to slip into that. You are almost invited to behave that way. That's fine but when you leave you may

> have left people confused, they didn't understand what you were saying. Upset because of the feedback you gave them. You talked at them rather than listened" (S1).

Another sending institution academic talked about how one should behave but that there is little support or advice given by the sending institution to help staff when they go abroad on partnership visits:

> "It is this cultural thing, how to behave, what to say, what message should you be conveying. How should you greet someone? Who should you speak to? Just because they speak English it doesn't mean they understand what you are saying. What support, formal support has any of us had? Or how to deal with our TNE students when we go abroad" (S3).

One of the pilot study students expressed their opinion that the sending institution representative (they were talking about a link tutor in this case) was important to them:

> "I think the main thing that influences people is the representative from (*sending institution*). He went over to (*host institution*). He gave a talk, what the University is like, what we do in the University so, as a student at an overseas university. We might think, wow, Is it really like this? It's like sparks the curiosity. So, I think that really helps" (P2).

From a West versus Malaysia point of view, a host institution academic made a point about having someone foreign on the premises that really helped the students. They said, "It helped having (*name of host institution academic*) here, a foreign looking lady walking around the campus. She was very friendly. So, they thought that was different" (H1).

The students also talked about visits by host institution academics and seemed to have been told what happened on these visits. However, it appeared that on lots of occasions, in listening to students, that they had not seen or met the link tutor or other host institution academics when they had visited. The pilot students, shown below, discussed this by saying:

> P2 "…..because my lecturers have conferences with representatives from (*sending institution*). So, every year, I

	think around the middle of the year, you will see a lot of (*sending institution*) representatives in *(host institution")*.
P1	"We have conference with the lecturers and then my lecturer told me whatever problems we are facing they will discuss them with the (*sending institution)* representatives".
Researcher	"Right. Did the (*sending institution*) representatives ever see you, or the students at (*host institution*)? Did they have a little meeting with you to ask you your views, how you were getting on"?
P2	"No, just the lecturers".

Only in a few cases did students say they had met the link tutor.

5.6 Identity

The theme of identity is based around how and why students (and staff) identify with the host and sending institutions and the implications for their experience in studying (and working) at the host institution and/or in the UK and is shown in Table 5.1 The implications of this theme impacts on how students (and staff) feel about either institution, their expectations and their perceptions towards both institutions, including the cultural and intercultural impact and issues that may arise from their experiences and expectations.

5.6.1 Quality

Students did not talk directly about the quality of the franchise programme, at least in terms of how the QAA and MQA would understand the term quality. However, students knew the value of a Western degree for their future employment and many talked about the standard of teaching they received on the franchise programme. As said above, it appeared from what host academics said to me, that parents of students were not always that interested in the quality of the programme as such but were more interested in their children passing the Western course for better future employment opportunities, in Malaysia and abroad. However, there was a recognition by host institution academics that a western qualification was still valuable in the competitive market for higher education in Malaysia. One host institution academic explained, "I believe there is still a market for it. The important thing is the quality because we still value the Western qualification ensuring a quality education. So that is very important" (H2).

Another host institution academic thought that parents did recognise somewhat that Malaysia was interested in raising academic standards when they said, "So, parents are a little bit more aware that Malaysia as a whole is trying to put itself being recognised in terms of a high-quality education" (H1).

However, there were some student comments that were made about quality of the franchise programme. For instance, one student talked about it as "a seal of approval" (FG2B). He went on to explain what he meant by seal of approval. He felt that the learning process was much more important to him:

> "I mean at the end of the day, different students place different kinds of priorities throughout their learning experience, I mean um, I would be lying if I say it like that perhaps the badge is not important at all and that's not important, but for me it's also the learning process because that's why I checked in the curriculum that's offered here first in comparison to the rest because that matters much more to me" (FG2B).

Another two second year students, however, shown below, with some agreement from others, when talking about their expectations of the franchise programme, talked about their view that the franchise programme was of a lesser quality than the UK programme:

FG2E	"We get the education but not the quality of the education. The quality that is, the (*sending institution*) quality (*Some nods*). Possibly because it is a franchise".
FG2B	"I mean, it's only franchise yeah? I don't know about (*sending institution*) in UK".

So, this group of second year students seemed to be accepting that the franchise programme delivered in Malaysia would be different and of less quality than the same programme delivered in the UK. But no other student group talked about the franchise programme directly in this way.

However, host institution staff took a different view about quality than the second year students mentioned above. One host institution academic praised the partnership with the sending institution when they were talking about the employability of franchise graduates:

> "This is where I strongly and very confidently say that (*sending institution*) has all the qualities for excellent employability. In fact, when we had our first graduates most had secure jobs within two months and as the numbers of students has increased some students have jobs before graduation. So, this is a testament of the quality of what we have as far as collaboration with (*sending institution*)" (H3).

The same host institution academic went on to talk about British programmes being of high-quality, particularly in terms of delivery supported by the sending institution with staff development opportunities. However, they also remarked about issues, as well, that needed to be resolved. They gave some examples of these issues by saying, "But there are still some issues about the ID cards and the annual renewal for (*sending institution)* VLE. So, students don't know their (*sending institution*) ID" (H3).

Although supporting the partnership and accepting the high-quality of the programme, the same host institution academic talked quite animatedly about host institution staff not being recognised by the sending institution:

> "Well, personally I have been working with (*sending institution*). more than three years, and I have visited (*sending institution*). And we meet (*sending institution*) colleagues and external examiners who help us, for academic quality. But there is no recognition by (*sending institution*) for a certificate, or a thank you message or any prize. So not monetary". (H3).

The sending institution academics acknowledged that the students had the opportunity to study a Western degree, partly because of the reputation of high-quality, but that this was not always explained to the students sufficiently and thoroughly. From my research, this appeared to be true as many students did not directly talk about quality. One sending institution academic talked about the quality processes by saying, "It is all part of the thing that they purchased a British degree because it is higher quality, but it is our processes and systems that guarantee that quality rather than necessarily the teaching styles themselves" (S1).

They went on to talk about the student's perception of quality:

> "I think sadly and unfortunately in a lot of cases their perception is probably right. I don't think we do a grand job explaining our quality systems to the

> students. It would be unfortunate if the staff didn't understand the quality systems. I don't think we explain enough to the students very well. I think they have bought into a British degree, whether they wanted to or not, and perhaps it would be a good thing to do at Induction or at some point to explain the value of the degree which sits with the quality which has to be managed and organised in this particular way" (S1).

Another sending institution academic talked about the same issues relating to quality, the need to tell students about it, and the need to not just see it as an annoyance. They said:

> "Reputation, quality, outcomes. The thing that should be there to ensure those are the controls. So, while I'm here I have to do that stuff. If they are buying UK degrees because they think they are high-quality let's make sure that they are, and why they are, and why they can have confidence in what they are buying. But it is not seen that way, it is seen as an annoyance, bureaucracy, hindrance to it" (S2).

Another sending institution academic talked about the amount of time and resources that are invested in ensuring a quality product, so we should let everyone know about this:

> "We invest a lot of time and effort at (*sending institution*) assessing the quality of our programmes. We are commended for our quality management of our programmes. So if you are going to invest that much why would you keep it from students…..but you also have the admin burden" (S3).

5.6.2 Student identity whilst studying

This sub theme relates to how students feel in relation to the host and sending institution. Do they feel more attached to the host institution or the sending institution? Most students felt that they were more a host institution student than a sending institution student although some felt they were both and a few felt that they were more a sending institution student. A typical answer for students who felt they were mainly a host institution student was from this second year student, shown below, who said:

> Researcher "So, do you see yourself as an (*host institution)* student? A (*sending institution*) student? A (*host institution*) and (*sending institution)* student? How would you, if you were talking to friends who hadn't seen you for a while, how might you

describe yourself if they said Oh what are you doing, what are you doing these days? How would you describe what you do"?

FG2B "I would say I was a (*host institution)* student……I'm still studying at (*host institution),* the *(host institution)* culture, identity is very fluid…" *(The group laugh).*

One student was very cautious in calling himself a sending institution student. He felt that it was a form of boasting and not right to really say that. In trying to explain his feelings to the group he said, "It's like, you're in Malaysia and I'm a (*sending institution)* student then, when it is like you come to the UK and you ask me this collaboration thing with (sending institution)" *(The group laugh*) (FG2E).

Some other students felt they belonged to both institutions. As an example, three final year students talked about feeling that they belonged to both institutions in a very positive way. They said, shown below:

FG3A "Both".
FG3D "Both, UK knowledge from (*host institution)* knowledge".
FG3E "It's like a perfect balance".

When talking to students in the pilot focus group, shown below, they considered themselves students at both institutions when in Malaysia, but more a host institution student. However, one of the students felt that the host institution was still a college, so it did bother her somewhat as she felt she was a student studying for a UK degree:

P2 "I think both…but it's more (*host institution*). Because physically, we are in (*host institution").*
P1 "Even though I'm taking a university course. We are at college".
Researcher "And that didn't bother you"?
P1 "Sometimes, it bothers a bit. I'm still physically at (*host institution)*. So, I'm still a College student. But, when people ask, I'm doing a degree from the (*sending institution*)".

A few students felt more like a sending institution student. One final year student, for instance, shown below, felt more like a sending institution student:

FG3B "A *(sending institution)* student".
Researcher "Tell me why you feel that (*a pause from the student*). So,

	if you feel you're a *(sending institution)* student, tell me why you feel you're a *(sending institution)* student"?
FG3B	"Because I'm learning your knowledge and I will get a certificate for that. I want to go to UK actually, but I cannot afford it".

When asked about how the sending institution could improve regarding making students feel more like sending institution students, the pilot study students, shown below, had some suggestions:

P1	"Yes. But people still consider you like (*host institution*)".
Researcher	"Have you got suggestions how (*sending institution*) might do things a bit better in the future, to make you feel like a (*sending institution*) at (*host institution*)"?
P2	"Guest lecturers. Maybe expose more on the students. Like as a student, I really would have liked a guest lecturer. So, we can share sessions. Teach one or two subjects. And then, I think, emphasise more on the exposure. So, we don't think we are at (*host institution*) all this while even though we are doing a degree from overseas. Something from home experiences".

However, those who felt only like a sending institution student were in the minority. Most students felt like a host institution student or host and sending institution student.

A host institution academic did criticise their students compared to other franchise programme students concerning their commitment and, in their view, complacency. They said:

> "The students are very complacent, so they sit their exams and then they are off. If you look on campus the competitor students are really proud of their programmes, but you do not see that from the (*the sending institution*) students" (H1).

5.6.3 Western degree

This sub-theme is based around reasons students gave for for wanting to study on a Western degree and the cultural issues behind these reasons. Students described how important it was to them to get a Western degree. Some students expressed the opinion that they wanted to study on a British degree, but for some as long as it was from a Western country they did not mind which country. There were a variety of

reasons given by students why they thought a Western degree was better. Some students thought it better for employment opportunities. For instance, one student said:

> "For me it's kind of like an important thing to have a Western degree because of the market they look like, they compare whether you're from a foreign university, a Western, so I think they would want, they would prefer students from, graduates from a Western university" (FG2E).

Other students thought the advantage of getting two certificates, with one an overseas certificate but studied at home in Malaysia was important. A second year student to illustrate this point, said, "No, it was just because once you get a degree here you get a certificate from (*host institution*) and a certificate from (*sending institution*), so I thought that I don't have to go overseas to get an overseas certificate, you can get it just by studying here" (FG2C).

The badge of a Western certificate was talked about by many of the students. For instance, one first year student said, "I think it's important plus we'll get a UK certificate, so it is easier to get job" (FG1G).

Two second year students, shown below, talked about how important the badge was:

FG2B	"I'd say the badge is more important for me".
Researcher	"It's the badge, the piece of paper"?
FG2D	"Yeah. It's for when I graduate, for me, when I go for a job… people will see the badge no one they don't really ask you like oh how was the learning process? It's just, I have friends who study in local universities… they seem to be doing okay they don't complain much about the learning process… it's just that I have the advantage that I have a Western university badge".

Some other students thought it financially worthwhile to study in Malaysia but on a Western degree course. One student summed this up by saying, "….but the whole idea was that basically you get a cheaper degree, you get a foreign syllabus here, a local university culture, at a cheaper price. I mean there's really not a better deal than that…" (FG2A).

Some students thought that studying on a Western degree gave them different experiences to a Malaysian degree. They thought that they learnt about different way of doing things and different cultures. For instance, one final year student said, "It was important because you can have different experiences and learn about culture" (FG6A).

Some students did not think having a Western degree at any cost was the most important thing. Some students talked about the content of the course being the most important thing and the skills you learn from the degree. Students in the pilot study, shown below, discussed this by saying:

P2	"I'm not sure about the rest. But I'm more concerned about what you learn during the process, what you gained during the lectures. And how relevant it is to the real world industry. From my knowledge, no matter how smart you are in your studies, if you cannot apply them, then I don't think the employer will employ you. So, I think (*sending institution*) has a structure where they give you projects, they have the soft skills studies. So, I think it's more relevant. Then, then you just memorise all the theories".
Researcher	"So, it's really the content of the course that is important, rather than it's a UK course, or an Australian course".
P2	"Yes".
P1	"Yeah, it's the content. Not necessarily because it is a UK degree. As long as we have a degree and can get a job".

A sending institution academic agreed that the badge was important to students from their experience talking to them over the years, particularly in getting a job overseas. They also made a point about the Malaysia students being patriotic, which would have implications for these students in returning eventually to Malaysia if they had been working abroad. They said, "I would say that is definitely a feeling I get. That they do want a Malaysian qualification. They are very patriotic, actually, they love their country, but the recognition of a Western degree is important. If they want to work abroad, then a Western degree will do" (S3).

A host institution academic also confirmed the view about the prestige of a Western qualification in Malaysia, particularly from a British university, when they told me,

"A Western university, like in the UK, gives prestige value. So, if you have the name of a British university it is a good thing in Malaysia" (H3).
However, this was at variance to one first year student who expressed an opinion some other students had expressed as well when he said, "I think that as long as it is from abroad, rather than our own country, it is better" (FG4C).

5.6.4 Global awareness and study and work abroad

Many of the students who took part in this research had aspirations to study or work abroad. Opportunities were available to study their honours degree at the sending institution as part of the SAP or transferring to take the final year in the UK. Graduates from the franchise degree also had the option to study for a master's programme at the sending institution at a discounted price after they had graduated. A host institution academic told how important this was by stating:

> "When they apply for a postgraduate programme, they have the opportunity to study at *(sending institution*) with a discount so this is one of the benefits. And, also, when they apply to other universities and send their applications with a (*(sending institution)* certificate it might help them to get an offer letter…." (H3).

A final year student talked about getting a master's degree in the UK and gaining wider experience and said, "Yes, I think so. I plan to follow my studies with a masters in the UK, so it is like small steps from one place to another and then go overseas for further study and get wider experience" (FG6A).

Working abroad after graduation was very important to most students that were part of this research, although nearly all that had this aspiration saw it as temporary as they wanted to return to Malaysia at some time. When talking to students many were keen to stress that returning to Malaysia after working abroad for a period of time was important for them, some saying about returning to family and friends and that Malaysia is home. A discussion, shown below, between final years illustrates this point:

FG3E "I would like to start off abroad and get experience. Probably not for long because Malaysia's home and home is where the heart is. So probably come back here because I gain

	experience from abroad because back here experience really pays".
Researcher	"And which countries would you like to gain experience in"?
FG3E	"Anywhere I get".
Researcher	"Anywhere, quite open really, just to get that experience so Europe or UK or States or other parts of Asia"?
FG3E	"Hopefully, the UK".
Researcher	"UK, okay, that's really good. What are your ambitions (*to another student*)"?
FG3A	"Work in Malaysia first. Because my family is based here also and then there are multinational companies here also and then if I can just get a chance to go abroad and have more experience there from those multinational companies then it's enough for me".
Researcher	"So, start off in Malaysia but if your work sends you abroad…."?
FG3A	"And then come back here".

One student in the second year talked about wanting different experiences by saying, "I need to get a job abroad, I wish to, for me, experiencing a different working lifestyle" (FG2A).

A number of students talked about getting different experiences through having a global education. A first year student said:

> "Because having a global perspective is important rather than just learning about what it is about our country as everything other countries do also affect our economy because what happens in UK also affects the Malaysians, because Malaysia depends a lot on business with the UK" (FG1G).

Another student in the first year was keen to study on the franchise programme as he thought he then may get a visa to work in the UK. He said, "If I study at (*sending institution*) hopefully I will get a visa so I can work there" (FG1E).

There were a number of examples of students talking about working abroad in the focus groups. Many of these students were very articulate in explaining why they wanted to work abroad. For instance, two first year students, shown below, said:

FG4A	"For me, my dream is to work in different countries. Perhaps stay two years in this country and then two years in another country. Because I like travelling and then I think it is very

	interesting to see other counties and to understand their culture. So, my dream is to do that".
FG4B	"I will try to go overseas for work and I hope to go to England to take my ACCA".

A further example of a student wanting to work abroad was when he said, "Important as I'm thinking of working in international business company so it's good to study more in other countries" (FG1F).

There were a few students who chose where to work abroad because of family connections. This again typified how important the link to the family. An example of this, shown below, was from a second year student when he said:

FG5E	"I want to go abroad and not work locally".
Researcher	"Where do you want to go to work"?
FG5E	"Australia or the UK. Because both countries where I have aunties and uncles".

However, a message that seemed to come through all the student discussions on wanting to work abroad, was that they wanted to return to Malaysia. It was summed up from one student when he said, "Malaysia is still home (FG1C)".

When talking to host institution academics they were able to explain some of the reasons behind students wanting to work abroad and return to Malaysia (or not). One host institution academic told me of parental wishes of wanting their children to study and work abroad by saying that:

> "Again, it goes back to the parents they are aware of the racial sensitivities in Malaysia. Most ethnic Chinese parents tell their kids you should get you education overseas and if you can stay there even better. So local Chinese in Malaysia have that mindset to go overseas and secure a future there. And by all means stay there" (*Laughs*) (H2).

Another host academic talked a little about the history of students wanting to study and work overseas. They talked about racial tensions and a foreign degree giving greater flexibility of where to work. They said:

> "A lot of students that we have are from the middle income group so they have seen and experienced migration of family and friends overseas. It is interesting that they said they would like to go out but then come back to Malaysia. If you had asked this question from my generation many would have said leaving the country and not coming back. Due to political and economic reasons the grass was greener elsewhere. You would see a lot of my peers either in Singapore or Australia (half of my class went abroad). But my peers have found that it is not as easy as what the perception was in my parent's time. Not easy getting jobs, there can be racial tensions even if they are somewhere else. So that's why a lot of the parents and students will choose a foreign degree because it gives an extra choice than any other localised degree" (H1).

Students were able to talk about the franchise degree giving them, what they thought of, as a global education and a global awareness generally and in a business context in particular. Some students thought that having a global education through a Western degree was very important. In part, it was one reason for some students, why they chose a Western degree. Below, shown below, is a typical discussion with some final year students about how they saw their global education:

Researcher	"So just on that note, how, how important was it in your choice of study to have a global education, so in terms of what you're taught, how you're taught, examples, all of that how important was it to think about your studies in a global way….was that important"?
FG3D	"Yes".
Researcher	"Yeah. Yes, tell us a bit more, why is it"?
FG3D	"Because it is communication with another country".
Researcher	"So, with another country so with the UK or just generally"?
FG3D	"Generally".
Researcher	"Yeah, yeah and so give me some examples if you can think how you might in class or how you were being taught, how that would look globally – are there examples that are given"?
FG3D	"The examples given by the lecturer what is the global issues nowadays and we further discuss anything that is related to it and then how we can explain our critical thinking in that issue".
Researcher	"Right, right and when they give you examples do they give you Asian examples or Chinese examples or European or UK or United States, how broad do they go? What about examples (a*ddressing another student*), do you in your studies get this worldview"?
FG3C	"We are given UK examples as well as from China and the USA".
Researcher	"So, it's very broad"?

FG3C "Yeah, it's very broad. It is not limited to one country or region".

A second year student brought in culture of other countries being important. He said, "Important. To gain a lot of experience and knowledge, to get to know their culture (*Nods*). Because, like when in Malaysia actions represent something, but in another country, you can get the wrong meaning" FG5A).

Another second year student thought a global perspective was normal as there was a rich mix of different cultures and nationalities in Malaysia. He said, "For us, it's kind of like a normal thing because you always like talk to each other. Indians, Chinese" (FG2E).

A final year student spoke animatedly about speaking and working with international students on the programme and how he had learnt interesting cultural things from the international students. He said:

> "That is quite difficult because since they are new here and stuff they can be quite reserved, but I mean if you persuade them hard enough then yeah but it's really nice having them in the group because we get a lot of other and different opinions and perspective. Especially, I have this class, English for Business so we were talking about taboos about how each country has taboos and stuff and we were discussing and exchanging opinions, it was really interesting to learn how they function because in each country they function in a different spectrum, right" (*Student quite animated*) (FG3D).

A host institution academic talked about the importance of a global education for students, and, at one time in the past and now, giving them a passport to leave the country. They said:

> "So, the students still want a global education that's why they would come to (*sending institution)* and then have this as a passport to leave the country. No need to leave but want that opportunity. Ten years ago, if you asked this of students, they would have said I want to leave the country, full-stop" (H1).

However, one second year student thought that as resources were on line they were international, and so as they were still being taught in Malaysia, the culture of Malaysia was paramount. He said, "I would say that education is international

because we get our resources online but if it comes to culture, I don't think so because our badge is still Malaysian, always the same kind of thing" (FG2D).

Another group of final year students, shown below, discussed how culture was linked to their assignments and how important it is to look wider than Malaysia:

Researcher	"What about in terms of that world view, do you talk and discuss and get taught about the kind of cultural issues as well of how people behave and think, is that something that lecturers talk to you about"?
FG3C	"Culture, I think in our assignments about how human resources are used in an organisation, what kind of different venue and different cultures what if an expatriate is going into another country and work and how can he understand more about the company's culture and because it will not be same with the original country he is from so we discuss about how important it is".
Researcher	"I think that's really important because we do live in a global world now don't we. What about the others do you do you get these examples and lecturers talk to you about culture"?
FG3C	"Yes" (*all students in group say yes).*
FG3A	"For cultural issues and subjects, how we are exposed to them".
FG3E	"How the multinational companies and their cultures expand its business to another country. They help us to know how this works. If just in Malaysia, we wouldn't know about the wider issues".

Some students were, however, a little reluctant over the possibility of working with the sending institution's students on group and project work even though they acknowledged that this would be helpful in many ways, including getting to know other opinions from a different culture. They mentioned obstacles such as the time difference and the risk of getting poor marks on an assessment if working with people they did not know and at such a distance away. Although some students thought it might be interesting, nearly all were cautious about such an initiative. Below is a selection of discussions about students working with sending institution students. A group of first year students, shown below, said:

FG4A	"It would be interesting, but the communications might be a problem because it is very far. I think for me I would prefer to meet up face to face. It is easier to communicate".

FG4C "Interesting and different countries have different ideas. So, we can change our ideas, but time is a problem".

FG4A "So, we could use the internet, email, WhatsApp but it is likely some people will not reply which would be difficult" (*Laughter*).

A group of second year students, shown below, said:

FG2B "It would be very interesting to try but would depend on the kind of commitment".

FG2A "That's the thing yeah".

FG2E "Are you ready for that kind of commitment"?

FG2C "Depends on how long you have to do it for…"

FG2A "Time difference".

FG2D "If it's on if there are no marks involved if the assignment is like just for you to do in one months time, then may be yes, not two months".

FG2E "If it's assessed individually, then it's okay".

Finally, a group of final year students from the pilot study, shown below, thought:

P1 "It depends…because sometimes the Internet is not good. In my own opinion it is not worth exploring, I don't think so. Because of the time zones as well".

P2 "If we do group work, we must make sure that not only we are available here but that they have to be available".

P1 "So, it's a lot of hassle I think because in Malaysia and in UK, we've got different teaching styles".

P2 "It might not be a very good idea because like if we have to work with students from (*the sending institution*), we would probably have quite different opinions. Because in Malaysia, we are not so much of a critical thinker, compared to the UK".

P1 "Also, I don't know who is that person. Who is this? Who is this? We don't know how they behave, or what characteristics they have. We don't know what strengths they have, to contribute to the group work".

A sending institution academic when asked about the students' views on them working across the two countries, acknowledged issues and challenges but also stressed the advantages to both sets of students and said, "Notwithstanding all of that, I still think the benefits of having a global classroom are very valuable" (S1).

5.7 Summary of the chapter

TNE students' have told, in their own words, their full and interesting story of their experiences on their TNE journey whilst undertaking a UK franchise business programme in Malaysia and spoken about the value they place on these TNE experiences. Host and sending institution staff have also given their views in order to help to understand the student views and experiences in the context of the student experiences and to learn from the student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience.

Interesting accounts and valuable insights from the students and staff point of view for each identified theme and sub theme were told. It seemed clear from the findings that have emerged from the data, through thematic analysis, that culture has played a significant and constant role in how students experience their HE journey on a TNE franchise programme in Malaysia. The findings in this chapter, through the themes of family; learning and teaching; identity; and behaviour, set out an interesting account and insights from the students' (and staffs') point of view giving a rich and deep record of their experiences.

5.7.1 Family

Students spoke about how parents and the extended family were fully involved in choosing their degree subject to study, choosing the institution at which to study, influencing them during their studies as well as their future careers. Deference of students to their parents and acknowledgement that parents were paying for their education and the cost (financial and otherwise) to their parents of this came out of the discussions in the focus groups. Influence on students of where and what older siblings studied was spoken about in the focus groups as well as influence of aunts, uncles, friends, teachers and others. Word of mouth was also mentioned as important to students but the accuracy of the advice was not always correct.

Pride and prestige of the family in getting what they consider the right education was important in talking to students and staff. It appeared from discussions in the focus groups and interviews that education and family pride are inextricably tied together in Malaysia, especially in the Indian and Chinese communities.

The importance and prestige of gaining a foreign certificate from a Western university was spoken about by students and host institution staff and that poor grades or failure of students considerably affect family prestige in the wider community. Studying abroad seemed less important to the students and parents than 10-20 years or ago.

In listening to students and host institution staff, the effects of the colonial past of Malaysia, being part of the British Empire until its independence in 1957, appeared to have an effect on the Malaysian family and their relationship with Britain and everything British. In particular, the effects of the British colonial past on the. education system in Malaysia and the use of the English language. This manifested itself in part by students and their families placing importance on getting a British degree, although for some others, a foreign degree from Western country was just as good.

When choosing an institution in which to study at, students spoke about a number of things. Some students thought that feeder courses at the same institution were important so they could transition through to the TNE programme and also gain discounted fees once on the TNE programme. Most students spoke of the importance to them of employer engagement and employment opportunities of the TNE programme. Some students mentioned that the quality and standards of host and sending institutions was important. Study abroad opportunities were also important. Less important to most students was the curriculum and learning and teaching. Students and their parents knew much more about the host institution and its brand, image and reputation than the sending institution before they made their choice of where to study.

For many students and their families, the sending institution was not that well known or that important, except to say that it was a British institution and the Malaysian rating systems were more important to them than any UK rating systems and tables. Often little advanced research on the sending institution was carried out by students or their parents. From speaking to host institution staff, employers appeared to place a high regard for a Western degree.

Students talked about how convenience was in their choice of institution and TNE programme. For some living at home and travel arrangements were important. For continuing students, existing friendships were important along with knowing and liking their lecturers.

In listening to students, the importance and reputation of employability and graduate success to students and their parents were key issues as was the link to employers, employer projects, a practical not just theoretical experience, and being exposed to employers whilst studying.

5.7.2 Learning and teaching

Students spoke about being happy with their Malaysian lecturers and no issues were raised about the standard of teaching or the support they got from full-time lecturers. However, students did raise issues about the poor standard of part-time lecturers. Students thought that there were too many part-time lecturers teaching students, but host institution staff made the point that there are only a few part-time staff teaching on franchise programmes. Students spoke about restricted access to part-time lecturers with many part-time lecturers lacking enough teaching experience. Students also talked about part-time lecturers not knowing enough about the host institution's use of Blackboard or knowing fully what the sending institution's processes are, and so not being able to advise students about them. Host institution had sympathy with what the students were saying and mentioned organisational and management issues in terms of planning ahead and recruitment of staff in a difficult employment market and it is not always easy to get the right calibre of staff in terms of teaching experience. Host institution staff spoke about measures being put in place to support part-time staff such as them having a mentor.

Many students felt that there would be a difference of the teaching style of UK lecturers as opposed to their Malaysian lecturers and a number of students said they would have liked some teaching from UK lecturers as this would be good experience to be exposed to a Western style of teaching. However, most students could not easily articulate the differences in styles of teaching between the West and their own lecturers although students in final year were able to articulate the differences in teaching styles over the degree programme. Final year students

studying in the UK on the Pilot research identified a key difference that in the UK there was an emphasis on critical thinking skills. Host institution staff spoke about that there was no active exchange of good teaching and learning practice between the host and sending institutions, but that it was one way only from the sending to the host institution.

Most students spoke about being happy with access to and availability of Malaysian full-time lecturing staff to support them and that they appreciated the friendly full-time lecturers and the small classes.

Most students were very concerned about moderation and the effects it might have on their marks. This coincided with the cultural consequences of the sometimes lack of confidence of host academics in front of Western colleagues when discussing marks after moderation along with the interaction between Malaysian and Western staff, and how the moderation process is explained to students.

Students from one focus group were concerned about confidentiality and the use of student feedback questionnaires by the host institution and the possible consequences on them if they gave negative feedback about their lecturers.

Some students did not like group work or did not like being in groups that were outside their friendship groups if picked by lecturers. Some students had challenges with group work with international students in their group and often cited poor English language skills of some international students. However, some students saw working with international students as a cultural benefit.

5.7.3 Behaviour

Loss of face for students and staff appear, from what was said in the focus groups and interviews, to be an important cultural difference between Malaysia and the UK and that this can affect students as well as staff. In particular, if staff are affected by loss of face with their Western colleagues, then this can affect students and their TNE experience.

Quietness and modesty were highlighted many times in my research by students and staff and is linked to loss of face above. Host academics told me they often kept quiet with their sending institution colleagues even though they had good practices they could pass on to the sending institution. Modesty in keeping quiet and their cultural background host staff gave as reasons. Because of the Malaysian's modesty and quietness, host institution staff said the sending institution needs to be more proactive in probing host staff.

From my research, it seemed clear that how the different stakeholders (e.g. parents, students, lecturers, managers, employers, etc) related to each other was really important. It also seemed clear from my research that the role of culture (between the West and Malaysia) was the key to helping understand how these relationships worked and could be improved. An example of how misunderstandings between the two cultures happened was when setting and moderating assessments. One sending institution staff member spoke about how uncomfortable he sometimes feels in relation to the partnership working whilst another sending institution academic talked about how one should behave but that there is little support or advice given by the sending institution to help staff when they go abroad on partnership visits. However, it appeared that on lots of occasions, in listening to students in their focus groups, that they had not seen or met the Link Tutor or other host institution academics when they had visited.

5.7.4 Identity

Most of the students in the focus groups did not talk directly about the quality of the franchise programme however, most students knew the value of a Western degree for their future employment and many talked about the standard of teaching they received on the franchise programme. Parents of students were not always that interested in the quality of the programme as such but were more interested in their children passing the Western course for better future employment opportunities, in Malaysia and abroad. Some second year students seemed to accept that the franchise programme delivered in Malaysia would be of less quality than the same programme delivered in the UK. But no other student group talked about the franchise programme directly in this way. Host and sending institution academics,

however, do believe the TNE programmes are of high quality but host institution staff felt that they were not being recognised enough by the sending institution.

Most students felt that they were more a host institution student than a sending institution student. A host institution academic did make a critical comment about their students compared to other franchise programme students concerning their commitment and, in their view, complacency.

Many students talked about how important it was to them and their families to get a Western degree and the badge of a Western. Some students wanted to study on a British degree, but for some as long as it was from a Western country they did not mind which country. Some students thought the advantage of getting two certificates, with one an overseas certificate but studied at home in Malaysia was important.

Many of the students talked about their aspirations to study and/or work abroad during and after their franchise degree with most saying it was important to them to return to Malaysia after working abroad for a period of time was important for students. There were a few students who could choose where to work abroad because of family connections. Some students thought that having a global education through a Western degree was very important. Some students were, however, a little reluctant over the possibility of working with the sending institution's students on group and project work even though they acknowledged that this would be helpful in many ways, including getting to know other opinions from a different culture.

5.8 Conclusion

The role of culture is seen to be interwoven into every aspect of TNE and was at the centre of all the research findings because of complex and interrelated reasons such as the important role of family and the colonial past of Malaysia, and these and other important issues will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

The next chapter examines and discusses the findings of each theme and the overarching theme of culture within the existing literature on TNE. The findings

will be discussed, in particular, in relation to Bourdieu's (1996) theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field. This discussion will then be directly related to answering the three research questions.

Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings

"Culture is an amorphous, ambivalent and contested concept." (Dimmock, 2005, 31)

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore, in-depth, the complexity and richness of the experiences and perceptions of host students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking UK franchise programmes in Malaysia. In addition, it was important to understand the value TNE students place on these experiences and to learn lessons from what TNE students said in order to deliver a high quality TNE student experience. Chapter 5 explored the lived experiences of TNE students through their rich stories on their TNE journey. This chapter will examine and discuss the findings of each theme and the overarching theme of culture. The findings will be discussed, in particular, in relation to Bourdieu's concept of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1996) along with other key concepts which will help contribute to the better understanding of individual behaviours. This discussion will then be directly related to answering the three research questions which are:

1. What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?
2. Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?
3. What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience?

As part of progressing through the phases of thematic analysis, modelled on the principles of Braun and Clarke (2006), I followed the advice of Clarke and Braun (2013,126) to ensure that my analysis, "both reflects and goes beyond the data collection questions, and captures contradictions and complexities in the data, and locates the data in the wider social context". I have ensured that the thematic analysis is fully grounded in the data from this research study

My reflexive approach has been important in this interpretivist research and is set out in more detail in chapter 4. In particular, before starting the analysis of my data, I noted any assumptions that I held about the research topic of TNE and the student experience, as well as reflecting on, and noting, my values and life experiences, and how this might shape how I have read and interpreted the data (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

It has been important in the discussion that follows that the research process has moved from description of the data to making an argument in relation to the research questions from the key themes that have emerged from the data that were presented in chapter 5 (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Based on thematic analysis, the research identified four themes of 1) family; 2) learning and teaching; 3) behaviour; and 4) identity, as well as an overarching or uber-theme of culture (see Table 5.1). How TNE students (and staff) behave was found to be an important cultural issue of TNE. The data has shown the influences, differences and awareness of culture on and by the students, as well as the staff, which can have a significant effect on students as part of their TNE experiences. From the findings of this research, culture is interwoven into many aspects of the TNE student journey at the Malaysian private college on their UK franchised degree. The intercultural and cross-cultural dimension at national and local level, and the resultant conflicts and challenges faced by students (and staff) have been highlighted. Cultural influences and differences were found to be interconnected in every feature of TNE.

As discussed in chapter 3, the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu are important in relation to the discussion and understanding of TNE and offer a rich theoretical framework to help explain patterns of behaviour. Bourdieu (1996) put forward three important theoretical concepts: capital, field, and habitus and these are relevant to this study and will be used to help interpret the findings of my research and help better understand an individual's behaviour and performance. Bourdieu (1996) distinguished between three forms or states of cultural capital: embodied (e.g. about knowledge and culture, skills provided by the family and school; long lasting dispositions of the mind and behaviours that are nurtured), objectified (e.g. the

possession of material objects and media that stylistically reflect his status in the community such as books, paintings and an individual can acquire cultural capital through possessing them; material objects) and institutionalised (e.g. accredited knowledge and skills objectified through academic qualifications such as awards or certificates)(Ariffin, 2019; Sin, 2013).

Bourdieu (1984, 250) argued that:

> "The value of culture, the supreme fetish, is generated in the initial investment implied by the mere fact of entering the game, joining in the collective belief in the value of the game which makes the game and endlessly remakes the competition for the stakes…It is in these struggles between objectively complicit opponents that the value of culture is generated, or, which amounts to the same thing, belief in the value of culture, interest in culture and the interest of culture…."

He argued that access to this capital decides where an individual will be placed in the social structure of society (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986, 243) stated that, "the more capital that an individual possesses, and is able to acquire, the greater their chance of social success". The conversion of this capital, although complex, is therefore, the central focus of Bourdieu's theory, giving individuals and groups an opportunity to accumulate and supplement capital to maintain or enhance their social positions in the world (Yüksek, 2018). Crozier and Davies (2006, 690) argued that:

> "Social capital is about networks between social groups as well as within social groups which enables individuals to access high or higher status/level social capital than merely remaining within their own milieu".

It has also been found that cultural capital, in particular, has an effect on educational attainment of students (Sullivan 2002). However, Bourdieu saw economic capital as the main form of capital and the best achievable goal for individuals (Yüksek, 2018).

6.2 Family

My findings clearly suggest the importance of the role of the Malaysian family, not only parents but the extended family, in the lives of students as they experienced their TNE journey. For families, education was seen as an important endeavour to

improve their life chances and gain better jobs and life styles. The influence and involvement of the parents and the wider, extended family, on student educational choices and decisions before, during and after their TNE journey was, therefore, found to be important. Bourdieu (1996) argued that higher education reinforces privilege, and this was certainly something, in my research, that students and their families strived for.

The influence of families on students involved the choice of institution to study at (including the sending institution that it was partnered with), what degree programme to study and career choices and jobs to follow. Hoare (2006) in her study also found that the opinions of a student's family are at least as important as the opinions of the student making the choice of where and what to study. Bourdieu argued that family plays an important role for an individual in acquiring cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996). Bourdieu (1996, 292), in discussing the family, argued that:

> "The family spirit and even affection that lend the family it cohesion thus contribute to securing one of the advantages that come with belonging to a family group (without expressly pursuing it as such, of course), namely, a share in the capital in whose integrity is guaranteed by the integration of the family, in other words, a share in the sum of the assets of all its members".

Bourdieu (1996, 292) also stated that:

> "…..the family continues to use the relatively autonomous logic of its own economy, which enables it to combine the capital held by each of its own members, in order to accumulate and transfer its wealth".

Bourdieu interpreted capital as a legitimate, valuable and exchangeable resource that individuals can use to gain advantage in society (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu (1996, 274) described this transformation of capital as "the alchemy of exchange" of money, work, and time into lasting obligations, either subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)".

The data from my research suggests that this influence of the family is strongly linked with the strong Malaysian culture and traditions of the importance of family within that culture, whether Malay, Chinese Malay or Indian Malay. As one

Malaysian staff member said in my research, “It is still Malaysia and many parents will make decisions on behalf of their children. When it comes to the end of the day, even for a fresh graduate, the decisions of parents are very important” (H2). A further comment from this host academic reinforced this point when they said, “The students do not necessarily know what they want. For us, it is much more about convincing the parents. Most students who join us require parental guidance” (H2) and as another host institution academic said, “So, family does drive it, that is very true in Malaysia” (H1).

Malaysia is collectivist in nature, whilst the UK is on the individualist side (Hofstede, 1991). Hofstede (1991, 63) argued that in a collectivist society, with the importance of the extended family, such as in Malaysia, the gaining of an award is not only of credit to the student but also to the student’s family, “and entitles the holder to associate with members of a higher status group and a ticket to ride”. The findings from my research are in line with this dimension with many of the students and their families appearing to want the prestige of a Western badge more than the learning that could arise from their studies. However, because of their qualification from a UK university, many students also wished to progress to good jobs, often abroad, if only to get experience, before returning to Malaysia.

Zain et al. (2013) found that the influence and recommendations of family, relatives and friends, in Asian culture, play an important role in how students choose their HE education. Brown (1997) cited in King (2010, 32) also found that Asian students are, “…often strongly guided by their parents in a form of ‘parentocracy’ of education”.

Bourdieu (1996, 21) discussed the indirect and diffuse encouragement given by families and argued that:

> “Support provided by the family takes on different forms in different milieus: the amount of explicit support (advice, explanations, etc.) perceived as such increases as social level increases, although it appears to decrease with the student’s increased success”.

Bourdieu (1996, 21) also made the point, however, that the, "Support is only the visible part of the gifts of all kinds that children receive from their families". Huang (2019, 46) argued in relation to Bourdieu's theoretical concepts that:

> "Families are seen as the institution that offers education. Education in this specific sense can refer to the training of behaviour and etiquette: a young person is taught to be polite while having a conversation with elders, for instance. This kind of education is not the same as the specialized or professional knowledge gained from school or university".

In my research, students showed deference to their parents' wishes and understood and appreciated the financial burden their parents would be taking on to educate them at this level of education. Some students mentioned the sacrifices their parents were making to support and pay for their HE studies. The investment that parents were putting into their children's education and future careers was appreciated by students with some students mentioning the sacrifices that their families were paying. The involvement of parents and the extended family, including parents paying for their education, appeared to be a normal expectation with this group of students. In many cases students did talk about joint decision making with their parents. In this regard, Sin (2009, 297) argued that:

> "The recurring theme of family obligations and responsibilities raises interesting questions about inter-generational negotiation in defining educational pathways and goals, and life priorities. One of them is how much freedom children are given to pursue their own interests and ideals, and the extent to which they feel happy to comply with the wishes and needs of their family".

The word 'we' (meaning the student and the family) was often used about how choices and decisions were made, and it did not appear to be, from my findings, that this advice from parents was over-burdensome or not welcome. For instance, a first-year student repeatedly spoke about his father and parents. The student said that:

> "For me I chose (*the host institution*) because coming from high school my parents told me because I did not really know what I wanted to study. My parents recommended me doing something in business, because I don't like science. So, I decided to take a course in business. I joined the foundation programme. Then I choose among a few universities, like *(…university and*

> *…university)* and some others. My father wanted me to actually take accounting. So, I wasn't really very sure and then there is a chance I might go abroad for a year to study, an exchange programme, and then my father think that for accounting the UK is better than Australia. In *(…university)*, they provide an exchange programme to Australia but my father think that it's better in the UK. So, in (*the host institution)* they have this exchange programme with (*the sending university*). And the fees are affordable by my family. So, we choose (*the host institution)"* (FG4A).

Bourdieu (1996) believed that home and family life play a major part in social reproduction and the reproduction of privilege through the important social network of family and friends. In this regard, parental financial support is of key importance and students in my research readily acknowledged and were grateful for this.

To confirm the view of the importance of parents in the decision making of students, a sending institution academic, who had spent some time at the host institution in Malaysia, explained how they saw the influence of parents:

> "I don't think I saw a student without the parents when they came to one of those recruitment type days. And quite often, when I was sat in my office in the college, I would still sometimes get the parents along as well. So yes, the parents are very involved. And often the people asking the questions when you speak to the students" (S3).

The same academic went on to say, "A lot of times I have spoken to mums and dads altogether with them asking the questions….and parents often ask how (*host institution)* supports the programme" (S3).

Both host and sending institution academic staff talked about the cultural influences of the Malaysian family in affecting how decision are made. It should be noted, however, that Malaysian families are an intricate mix of many influences, histories and cultures over many centuries, including by the British empire. Malaysian society is, therefore, rich in different cultures and peoples, including indigenous Malaysian, Chinese Malaysian, Indian Malaysian and other Asian cultures. Although Malaysian society is very culturally mixed, the influence in particular, of the Chinese Malay families was mentioned. Caution must, therefore, be used in trying to generalise these findings within and outside Malaysian families.

My research showed an insight into expectations, motivations and experiences of older siblings and the extended family generally. The extended family was, therefore, important in influencing the students about their choices and decisions, along with financial and location issues. There were many examples given of older brothers, in particular, studying at HE level that influenced their younger sisters or brothers to take up a particular programme at a particular college. An example of a second year female student below shows that the experience of her brother was important:

FG5B	"For me, my brother came here to (*the host institution)* on the foundation programme and he went for (*university*) as well. He has graduated with second class honours".
Researcher	"So, he introduced you to (the host institution) by saying it is a very good College"?
FG5B	"Well, I just followed him".
Researcher	"But did he say it was good, bad or…"?
FG5B	"He said it was good. And it suited my parent's financial situation as well".

This was also the case of other members of the family such as uncles, who had studied on Western degrees and were able to give advice to their nieces and nephews.

Teachers, lecturers, career advisors and friends, were also mentioned as important sources of advice that had influenced their decisions and choices. Zain et al. (2013) also found that student perceptions were formed by talking to experienced and qualified lecturers who could promote the institution and programmes, and this proved important in positively influencing student decision making.

From my research, word of mouth with families and friends was important. Evidence emerged from students saying friends of the family, as well as aunts and uncles, gave advice as to where and what to study and passing on information to each other to aid the decision-making process. Tsigaris (2015) also found that this was the case when students were making decisions about their future education. My findings are also consistent with the research of Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakadis (2011) who found that social networks influenced students, including relatives, friends, extra-familial adults, and peers along with role of teachers and school. Zain

et al. (2013) also confirmed that word of mouth is important and suggested institutions could use this to promote TNE to potential students as well as using student ambassadors as part of their advertising campaigns.

Bourdieu (1996, 285) discussed what he called "the grand corps", explaining that it was:

> "a social group that the school produces…from properties also related to the family, take the place of the family and family ties, with the 'cooptation' of classmates based on school and corps solidarity taking over the role played by nepotism and marital ties in business that have the privilege of the transfer of privileges".

Bourdieu, 1996, 286) went on to argue that:

> " The strategies used by the grands corps in defending their social capital obey a logic very similar to that of families…in both cases the value to each member depends on the contribution of all the others as well as on the possibility of actually mobilizing the capital held by the group, hence on the real solidarity among members of the group….whenever a member of the group is nominated to a prestigious position, the social and symbolic capital of all the others is enhanced…"

The reproduction of this 'prestigious' status, perceived or otherwise, was important to students and their families in undertaking a UK degree in Malaysia, as part of a 'grands corps', as they thought that it would give them valuable social capital to enhance their lives and give them good employment opportunities and, as Bourdieu (1996, 286) noted, "their stocks go up". However, as Waters and Leung (2013) in their study in Hong Kong found, TNE programmes do not always provide students with the social capital they desire.

Interestingly, in discussion with a host academic, it seemed that word of mouth about whether to study a UK or Australian degree at the host institution was sometimes misinformed and misunderstood. There was a feeling by some students that the Australian university course was harder. Word of mouth was important, but accuracy of information passed on is, seemingly, not always reliable.

Family pride and getting the right education seemed important in my research, especially to the Indian and Chinese Malay families. In the past, from what I was told, it appeared that parents sending their children abroad to study was important as a sense of their pride. It now seems less important and, indeed, harder because of the increasing cost and more recent fall in the exchange rate, but going to the right institution, studying on a Western degree seems now the most important thing for this cultural group in Malaysia.

From my interviews with staff, the data suggests that education and family pride are inextricably tied together in Malaysia, especially in the Indian and Chinese communities and that the political situation in Malaysia over time has meant that these communities have mainly relied on private institutions for their family education. One of the host institution academics who related this to me said that, "Pride is a key issue" (H2) a number of times, and that the right education, at the right price and, in the past, overseas were important.

My research found that education and family pride are inextricably tied together in Malaysia, especially within the Indian and Chinese communities. The pride and prestige of the family in getting what they consider to be the right education is important and so a Western degree from a Western university is paramount to these families. Studying abroad, according to host institution staff interviewed, seemed less important to the students and their parents than 10-20 years ago. However, most students, as also found by Sin et al. (2019) regarding the Malaysian students in their research, would have liked to have studied abroad but realised that this was difficult because of the costs, the poor exchange rates at the time and family commitments. Most students also had a wish to experience working abroad after they had graduated. However, this is at variance to Bailey and Ingimundardottir (2015) who found that most of the students in their study wanted to seek their careers, at least to begin with, in Malaysia.

A host institution academic in my research talked about how important it was for parents to have successful children which was key to family prestige. Students having poor grades, or failing, affect family prestige in the wider community. Mahmud et al. (2010, 4) found that parents often requested the results of their child,

placing the relationship between the student and host institution lecturer in "a more complex position culturally". In a finding from my research, a host academic told me that in their discussions with parents, pride and prestige often came up:

> "Arguments with parents are often about I pay you, so they should pass this module. If you sit down and explain the quality assurance processes with parents but it is about the family, and what drives the family is prestige, about pride so they can't accept the fact that my child was getting A grades, and I come here, and you are telling my child is not up to that standard. So, they are not bothered about your QA, I just need to know my son has passed" (H1).

In addition, the same host academic expanded on this by stating:

> "It boils down to a statement whereby family pride and prestige are important. A parent said I can't sit on a table full of businessmen and say my son has got kicked out of university or just barely passing. I can't have that. So, it sums up the whole difficulty that we have – it is about the status of a family, how children are educated. As long as they get good grades they don't care how it comes about" (H1).

It seemed clear from what was being said that family pride, prestige and status were amongst the most important aspects of the Malaysian family. This seemed to be even more important than the quality assurance processes that were advertised by both the host and sending institutions as making the franchise programmes high-quality. However, some of the students did talk about the importance of HE, to them and their family, and a few talked about their parents' expectations in terms of their HE and subsequent career journeys. The importance to students and their families in getting a Western degree and a good job after graduation was of paramount importance because of family pride.

TNE also plays an important part between the UK and Malaysia because of their historical and linguistic bonds (Alam et al., 2013). The effects of the colonial past of Malaysia, being part of the British Empire until its independence in 1957, appeared to have an effect on the Malaysian family and their relationship with Britain and everything British. There seemed to be a close bond between the two societies. In part, this may be because of the effects of the British colonial past on the education system in Malaysia and the common use of the English language in education and Malaysian society generally. A second year student in expressing his

opinion about prestige and the historical past spoke about the importance of the effect of the colonisation of Malaysia in the past and so the importance and prestige of gaining a foreign certificate from a Western university. He said:

> "There's this whole idea of prestige that's associated with a Western education I mean to be blunt there's years of colonisation and there is a certain form of prestige attached to a foreign, you know a foreign certificate when you leave in comparison to say elsewhere" (FG2B).

An academic from the sending institution also talked about how strong the British brand is, particularly to the parents of students. They told me:

> "I think the British brand is still very strong, particularly for parents. They like the idea of a British education. So, I think that is one factor in terms of choice, the Britishness and the regard they hold for the UK and obviously Malaysia as a former colony. So, people like the British brand" (S1).

Sin (2013) found that TNE students had trust in the quality and prestige of a UK education and that they had an unquestioning acceptance of British standards and influences which he argued was evidence of the colonial legacy in Malaysia. Sin et al. (2019, 140) stated that for the Malaysian students in their research, "The symbolic power of British standards is a legacy of colonialism which continues to capture the aspirations and imagination of Malaysians some six decades since the country's independence". This was also a key factor in my research. However, it should be noted that my research related to a UK franchise programme only. At the host institution, there were also partnerships with Australian and American universities. If the research had included those students as well, the close links with the UK and the importance of the colonial past may not have been so strong. However, the use of the English language was still a strong factor whether choosing a UK or another foreign country's TNE programme.

My research found that acquiring knowledge for the sake of knowledge was of no real interest to TNE students, which was consistent with the research of Waters and Leung (2017), although one student did talk about the learning process and curriculum being more important to him, but he was an exception. Students gave other explanations such as to gain employment and work overseas. However, Egage

and Kutielah (2008) found in their research that students do enrol onto Western TNE programmes to receive transformative experiences by gaining an international experience.

A number of students chose the host institution because they were already on a foundation programme or diploma programme there and they did not wish to move. A number of students said that they knew the staff and that staff knew their names and they were comfortable there. A few students also talked about fee discounts to continuing students on to HE programmes at the college which made a difference to them and their families.

Students and their parents seemed to take account of a number of factors in the choice of institution and programme. Employment opportunities after completing their award was a key feature for many students in choosing a Western university. In this respect, some students did talk about the host institution's employer engagement focus and that this did in part, sway them in their choice of institution. In all the focus groups employability was one of the key factors. A typical response from students was as shown below:

Researcher	"So, going back to one of the original questions of why choose (*host institution*/*sending institution*), was the employer engagement important as well in the decision making? Did you know that there was real emphasis by (*host institution*/*sending institution*) on employer engagement before you came"?
FG6B	"Yes, yes, that's why I came – one of the key factors why I chose studying at (*host institution*) and (*sending institution*). I asked my friend studying at the *(…university)* and they did not have much employer engagement. They only study based on books".

Students also talked about how important the availability of the Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) was to them in their decision making. The SAP is an opportunity to study on the same programme for a semester but at the sending institution in the UK. As an example, one diploma student talked about the franchise having a SAP, so the chance to go abroad:

> "I wanted a degree, I was here doing the diploma, so yeah, once I was done with the diploma I enrolled on BSc (*sending institution*) because the prospectus was good and we had this 3 + 0 collaboration which is awesome and they also have a semester abroad programme like for one semester where you can go abroad. It was very inviting" (FG3A).

A few students did talk about quality and standards of the host and sending institutions, but most did not raise these factors in their focus groups. In part, it may be that this was taken for granted because of the quality regimes in both Malaysia and the UK. In other words, undertaking a Western degree came with high standards.

Webb et al. (2002, 110), in discussing Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field, stated that:

> "Education is an important field because of its capacity to confer capital, particularly cultural capital, upon its participants. Certain forms of knowledge, for example, formal learning is conferred with more cultural capital than other forms of learning".

Webb et al. (2002, 111) went on to argue in the light of Bourdieu's concepts that, "The cultural capital bound up in a degree or certificate is increasingly mandatory for entry into the field of employment".

From my research, what appeared to be a key factor, though, in the choice of undertaking a Western degree was, as Waters and Leung (2017, 278) found in their study, **"**the symbolic power of the university degree and the practical power of the degree certificate".

Two second year students, shown below, talked about how important the badge of the UK degree was to them:

FG2B	"I'd say the badge is more important for me".
Researcher	"It's the badge, the piece of paper"?
FG2D	"Yeah. It's for when I graduate, for me, when I go for a job… people will see the badge no one they don't really ask you like oh how was the learning process? It's just, I have friends who study in local universities… they seem to be doing okay they don't complain much about the learning process… it's just

> that I have the advantage that I have a Western university badge".

Research undertaken by Doorbar and Bateman (2008) and McNamara and Knight (2014) noted a high percentage of students, staff and employers, did not know about TNE and the opportunities and experiences it presented in their country. Students were asked in my research whether they had heard of terms such as TNE or cross-border education. Without exception in my research students had not heard of these terms. However, this is probably not a problem insofar as all students knew about the TNE opportunities available to them even if they did not know about the terminology. Perhaps more importantly, it would have been interesting if staff at the host and sending institutions, not directly involved in TNE, were asked about opportunities in their own institutions. It would also be interesting to know if students at the sending institution knew that they had colleagues across the world studying the same programme. From talking to host institution staff, it appeared that employers in Malaysia know about TNE and the benefits to them and their organisation, which seems, therefore, at variance to the studies of Doorbar and Bateman (2008) and McNamara and Knight (2014) but again, caution is needed because of the relative small-scale of my research.

Fang and Wang (2014) found in their research that the choice of TNE by students is governed by the characteristics of the sending institution not the host institution and that students have a low opinion of TNE and see it as second best. This is at variance to the findings of my research where TNE had generally a good reputation among students and their families (and employers), although many of the students would have preferred, if finances allowed, to study abroad in the UK rather than at home. However, from my research, no student expressed regret in choosing their TNE programme, which accords also with the findings of Hoare (2012).

The extent to which students researched opportunities for TNE study varied widely which was consistent with the findings of Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015). Students in my research did little investigation, although there were a few notable exceptions, and most made their decisions on family advice or family experience of HE study. Students and their parents knew much more about the host institution and its brand,

image and reputation than the sending institution before they made their choice of where to study. The importance of Malaysian rating systems to students and their parents appeared to be more significant than that of the quality systems of the country of the sending institution. For many students and their families, the sending institution was not that well known or to some, that important, except to say that it was a British and so Western institution. This seems to be at variance to Van-Couter (2018) who argued that students and parents appear to place emphasis on reputation and branding, as well as global recognition of TNE courses, which, he argued, act as pull factors in the choice of institution. Obermeit (2012) believed that the academic reputation of HEIs appears to be highly rated by students in choosing which university to study at. Doorbar and Bateman (2008) found that student choice and the importance of reputation of the sending institution varied depending on which country the students came from. Reputation, they found was more important to Malaysian prospective students.

Wilkins et al. (2017) found that the power of the international brand was very important. In my research it was more to do with the host institution partnering with a Western university and the brand of the host institution being well known by students and their families. In addition, Wilkins et al. (2017) argued that students also identify with the sending institution, but this was not the case in my research, where most students identified with the host institution rather than the sending institution. Hill et al. (2014, 961) found that the UK branding of the TNE programmes was important to students and, "a UK degree is a ticket to employment". This accords with my research findings, particularly having a Western degree certificate. In contrast to my research, however, Hill et al. (2014) also found that students saw the UK branding being linked to UK institution staff teaching and supervising projects on the programmes. However, in my research, there was no or little UK teaching on the TNE programmes, but many students did raise the issue that they would like some teaching from the sending institution. Hill et al. (2014) concluded that because the students' priority of gaining a UK certificate was more important to them over other aspirations, they were going along with the commodification of TNE. This also accords with the views of Sakamoto and Chapman (2011) and others that education is now treated more like a commodity and it appears to be the case from my research as well.

Very few students investigated the UK rankings of the sending institution and where it was currently situated. Wilkins et al. (2017) argued that the country of the sending institution has status and prestige in the eyes of prospective students even if the HEI has a lower ranking in tables in the home country. This may well be the case as most students wanted a Western education, and in my research, a British degree, and they knew relatively little about the sending institution as such. Hoare (2006, 245) found in her research that the sending institution's prestige was less important than other things and stated:

> "….the 'prestige' often assumed to be inherent in a 'Western' education in general, and the sandstone university in particular, was notable for it's scarcity in student response. In contrast, the perceived prestige of the local partner institution was a crucial deciding factor. The relevance of collectivism to choice of university was apparent from two perspectives: the opinions of friends and family were definitely important, as was the capacity to contribute to society as a 'learned person'".

As an example of a discussion between students in a focus group in my research, shown below, students talked about rankings of both institutions as less important than how good the teaching is:

Researcher	"Was it important to look into that, to have a high ranking university"?
FG5E	"In my opinion I am not too bothered about that as long as the lecturer can teach well and there will be jobs for us at the end".
Researcher	"So, the rankings were less important"?
FG5D	"For me, less important".

The lack of awareness of TNE by key stakeholders including students and employers, and what a TNE experience may consist of, could mean that TNE programmes need more and better publicity in the host institution (Knight and McNamara, 2017). Zain et al. (2013) argued that the importance of television and radio adverts in promoting institutions was important to students when choosing their HE programme, and this may be something the host institution in my research should consider further.

From my research, value for money and affordability played a role in where students eventually study. Many students understood the financial pressures on their

parents and knew the importance of price sensitivity. Fee discounts to continuing students were also an important factor in choosing whether to say on at that college for their HE experience. It was acknowledged by academic staff from the sending institution that it was a good marketing tool to offer study abroad opportunities, even if most students, in the end, will not be able to afford to travel abroad to study.

However, affordability and value for money seemed, from the data, to be linked with price sensitivity, culture and the importance of family aspirations, and the need for a quality product of a Western degree. A host academic made these points by stating:

> "It depends on the geographical location and the consumers are much more price sensitive. And most definitely value for money is very important for most parents. But again, we need to position ourselves in terms of the *(sending institution)* programmes. And I believe that the positioning of the *(sending institution)* programme is not too expensive. So even if the cost was to be increased, I believe there is still a market for it. The important thing is the quality" (H2).

Some students chose the host institution almost from inertia. It was easier to stay in the same institution, following on from their pre-HE studies, than move away to another educational establishment to start their HE journey. However, some other students made a positive choice. If they were on a foundation or diploma programme at the host institution they had formed friendship groups that were important to them. They knew and liked their lecturers. A number of students wanted to continue to live at home because of family commitments or financial issues. Some students talked about the importance of travel arrangements and convenience of getting to college each day (by car or public transport). A few students mentioned that they preferred the main campus that was some miles outside Kuala Lumpur rather than having to travel to the city with the traffic congestion and delays. A few students who travelled by car mentioned parking issues at the main campus in Kuala Lumpur but they did not outweigh the other advantages of studying on the main campus.

For many students, they could continue living at home, but some were happy to go on living in college or private accommodation close to the college. A conversation

between the Researcher and two students shown below, typifies what some of the students said:

FG1A	"Because I did foundation at (*the host institution*) so I continued at (*the host institution*)".
Researcher	"You took the foundation. Why continue? Were there good reasons for staying at (*the host institution*)"?
FG1A	"I was familiar with the environment already and didn't want to change".
Researcher	"Presumably you knew all the lecturers, the college. What about anybody else? Why (*the host institution*)"?
FG1B	"Value for money. My mum wanted me to transfer to another university to complete my degree, but I'd been here two years and it's been home. It's not easy to change so I decided to stay at (*the host institution*)".

Employability and career opportunities in Malaysia and abroad, once students have graduated, were important to TNE students and their families. This is consistent with the findings of Knight and McNamara (2017) who found that careers development and professional skills improvement was the key motivation for choosing TNE. The reputation of the host institution, and to some extent the sending institution, concerning employability and employer engagement was found to be important. The link to employers and employer projects, practical not just theoretical, and being exposed to employers whilst studying were important to students in my study.

The link to employers, employer projects, practical not just theoretical, and being exposed to employers whilst studying. were very important to students. This was a common view across all students in the focus groups and across years. An example of this is shown below:

FG6A	"It is because it is something like a polytechnic school and can learn things more than just theories, can have hands on experience, like we are having some events at (*host institution*). I think it is something like linking with employers. Most of my assignments involve primary research, needing to go out to talk to employers to get some information for us to complete the assignment. So, it is something like experience rather than just search on line".
FG6E	"At (*host institution*) we have workshops with employers during careers week so our lecturers ask us to go to the

	workshops and write a review journal. So, we have to be focussed in the workshops and then we can learn".
FG6D	"So, most of the workshops are to do with interview skills, skills on writing CVs, which I think benefits for future careers".
FG6B	"And the case brought from the employer is the real case. And it is totally different from what we read from the theory. They will always share their experiences with us. So, it is quite interesting".
Researcher	"Do the employers come in as well to listen to your employer projects when you have completed them"?
FG6A	"Yes, and we can directly comment with the employer".
FG6C	"We present in front of them".
FG6E	"And we provide our ideas".
FG6D	"We explain our plans, our activities, our events and then we need to present to them and then they will choose the best ideas. After that we need to present again our progression".

The British Council also found that employment opportunities on TNE courses were more important to students than the actual 'brand' and reputation of the host and awarding institutions (Malik 2012). However, in my research, the brand of the host institution which is focused on employer engagement was recognised by many of the students and their families and hence why they chose it. Although the sending institution also has a reputation for employability, and a key reason why the partnership between the two institutions came about in the first place, this was less well known or not known by students when they were choosing where to study.

Knight and McNamara (2017, 9) found that, "TNE programmes are responding to student interests more than the needs of the labour market", although they admit care must be taken as there is limited evidence to uphold this assertion. In my research, host institution staff believed that the skills that students were gaining from the TNE programmes at the host institution were what employers were needing and their students did well when applying for jobs. However, again care needs to be taken over this as employers were not directly involved in my research and further research would be helpful in knowing the needs of employers and their understanding of TNE.

Knight and McNamara (2017) also found that study abroad and internship opportunities for TNE students were important, as there were in my research, to

give students the chance to travel abroad as well as developing their international outlook and intercultural skills. Most students will take up internships (unlike their sending institution student colleagues). However, in my research, most students, although originally choosing the TNE programmes because of these opportunities, eventually will not take the study abroad option, often because of financial constraints.

The franchise can be criticised because it does not necessarily adapt to the country and its conditions it is moving to, but merely replicates what is on offer in the sending country, apart from minor changes. Tsiligiris (2015b, 1) called this, "the 'McDonaldisation' of higher education". Doorbar and Bateman (2008) stated that franchise programmes are often said to be of equivalence with comparable student outcomes but the student experience whilst on the franchise may vary considerably to the home programme in the sending country. However, students and staff in my research did not raise the franchise itself as problematical but appeared content, in their view, to have what they considered, a UK experience whilst in Malaysia.

It can be seen, therefore, from my research that, as Bourdieu (1996) has argued, family plays an important role for an individual in acquiring cultural capital and that TNE plays an important role in that process for students and their families.

6.3 Learning and teaching

It should be noted that my research focusses on a franchise programme so most of the teaching is undertaken by host institution lecturers, apart from limited contributions from the link tutors and UK guest lecturers when they visit. Nearly all students studying on the programme are young, all are full-time, with assessments written mostly by host institution staff, but reviewed by sending institution staff (and external examiners for final year assessments). The curriculum is the same as that taught in the UK with limited localisations and contextualisations such as using Malaysian law.

Many of the students wanted more input from the sending institution, particularly in terms of them teaching on the programme. This was not what was on offer, though, and would be a different funding model that both the host and sending

institution may not want or could afford and so sometimes caused tensions (Waters and Leung (2017). However, there may be a middle way with more visits from the sending institution to teach on the programme, depending on any financial issues between the partners. Ackers (2012, 143) argued that limited visits that are well organised and planned can "play a very important role in promoting knowledge transfer" so this may be a possibility.

Most students were happy with their local lecturers and no issues were raised about the standard of teaching or the support they got from full-time lecturers (although many students did have negative issues with part-time lecturers, discussed below). Most alumni in the research by UK HE International Unit (2013) also had positive experiences of their TNE journey, although in their case there was also a significant minority who had a poor experience. Many students in my research felt that there would be a difference in teaching styles with UK lecturers, as opposed to their Malaysian lecturers, but most, apart from a few students, could not articulate the differences there may be in these styles of teaching. A number of students would have liked some teaching from UK lecturers as they believed it would be a good experience to be exposed to a Western style of teaching and that they would be getting a UK experience rather than just a Malaysian experience. An example of final year students discussing this is shown below:

FG6B	"They would have brought different teaching styles and because we grew up in Malaysia so we're already used to and confined to this type of education system and a lot of us have this way of thinking which is a very good thing and also I believe the Malaysian lecturers have a wealth of experience to share and their knowledge, so yeah but it would be still good to have other lecturers as well".
Researcher	"Do you think by studying here at (*host institution*) that you are getting the same or similar kind of experience, the cultural experience as if you went on a Semester Abroad Programme"?
FG6D	"I think it will be a bit different because of the culture, sometimes we have a Malaysian style of doing things".
FG6E	"A study difference like in class, I think a bit different maybe".

This finding was also the case in the research of UK HE International Unit (2013). Chapman and Pyvis (2005) found that students viewed cultural differences in the

style of teaching and learning as one of the main benefits of the TNE programme and gave them an edge.

Some students in my research did raise the issue of poor English language skills of some international students and how this sometimes interrupted their learning, with lecturers having to spend more time to explain issues to those students. Group work was also mentioned as challenging if international students had poor English language skills. A host institution academic also raised an issue of local lecturers (and students) speaking a different English, which may sometimes cause misunderstandings, particularly with sending institution lecturers. They said:

S3	"Both, culture and language. So, we don't speak the same language. That is an assumption. They don't always understand the language. Some of the students tell me they don't understand me".
Researcher	"Is that because it is their second or third language"?
S3	"No, no, it is because their English is different from our English. And people are far too polite. Students often say but staff often won't. And culturally, yes, there is the Malaysian way to be friendly. And there are things going on that we don't know about. They won't necessarily tell us. They say everything is fine".
Researcher	"How can you resolve that"?
S3	"You have to know what questions to ask. Be prepared to have a bit of a dig. You have to know who to talk to. You have to respect that we will always be a visitor there and we will always be treated as a visitor….".

Sin (2013) found that students often spoke in colloquial Malaysian English in their home country on the TNE programme whereas students thought that they would speak standard English if studying in the UK. This was spoken about by students in the pilot focus group. They said:

P1	"I think they are facing difficulties in terms of the English language. Because on a daily basis, we speak Malaysian English. The way they apply to their essays, it's not standard, it's not professional. I think we need more of professional English exposure. Me and my friends. As a whole".
Researcher	"So, in terms of writing academic English"?
P2	"Yes. I think it's very crucial".

Researcher	"Perhaps, do you think something we could improve upon to help students to study? Give perhaps more support in terms of expectations in writing? Is that what you are saying"?
P2	"Some of my friends. In terms of expressing, there are difficulties. How do I do this? …my friends, I can see they are really struggling with their work. Just to get a degree".

Students studying in the UK on the pilot research identified a key difference in that in the UK there was an emphasis on critical thinking skills. They also talked in the pilot about the larger numbers in class in the UK and the emphasis now on reliance on their own skills with less support from lecturers. Students in their final year in Malaysia were also able to articulate the differences in teaching styles over the degree programme with students developing into more individual and independent learners once they had reached the final year.

Staff from both the sending and host institutions confirmed that there was little active exchange of good practice from the host to the sending institution. The exchange of information, ideas and good practice was mainly one way, from the sending to the host institution. This reinforced in the minds of some host institution staff where the power was in the relationship and how, in many ways, it was only a one way and unequal partnership. If there was an equal share of exchange of good practice, then the sending institution students (and staff) in the UK may benefit from this good practice. Dunn and Wallace (2008c, 249) argued that TNE can provide, "…the possibility of rich and meaningful intercultural encounters among institutions and their staff, teachers, and students…". As part of their argument to increase this dialogue and to feel part of the academic community to help the morale of TNE lecturers, Dobos (2011) recommended the use of intercultural communities of practice. They stated that communities of practice need to be inclusive for all, so need to be embedded in agreements and guidelines within the partnership to work effectively across borders.

Students in my research talked about issues with the poor standard of part-time lecturers and the restricted access to them because they were on campus just for their teaching duties. Many students also thought that there were too many part-time lecturers teaching them, but host institution staff said that there were only a few part-time staff teaching on the franchise programmes. Some students were

concerned that many part-time lecturers lacked enough teaching experience and that they did not know enough about the host institution's use of Blackboard (the VLE used at the college for this franchise). Students also said that part-time lecturers did not fully know what the sending institution's processes and regulations are, and so could not fully advise students about them. An example of student views on part-time lecturers is shown below:

Researcher	"What about lecturers"?
FG6A	"Yes, they are good".
FG6B	"Some lecturers are good, but the part-time lecturers don't have enough experience. Even in year two and three I am still taught by part-time lecturers".
FG6C	"Yes, even on my last semester I am taught by two part-time lecturers".
FG6D	"And I still have part-time lecturers".
FG6A	"And they are not really aware of *(sending institution)* processes, how *(sending institution)* works".
FG6E	"They also don't know how to access Blackboard, it's ok *(but sighs*) but they don't have enough experience about teaching (*general agreement*)".
Researcher	"So, don't know enough about (sending institution) processes and don't know enough about using Blackboard, and about how to teach"?
FG6E	"They don't know how to teach and cannot advise us on using *(sending institution VLE").*
FG6B	"Some part-time lecturers have teaching experience, so that is ok, but some come from corporate organisations and this is their first-time teaching".

The host institution Dean of School readily acknowledged that it was not always easy to get the right calibre of part-time staff in terms of teaching experience. It was also acknowledged that there were organisational and management issues with the host institution in terms of planning ahead and the recruitment of part-time staff in a difficult employment market. I was told that measures were being put in place to support part-time staff such as allocating a mentor to them, but this appeared to be an on-going issue that affected the students on their TNE journey.

Students in my research were happy with access to and availability of the full-time local lecturing staff to support them, although as stated above, access to part-time staff was not always easy. Students spoke of friendly full-time lecturers who knew their names, teaching in small classes, which suited many students. Class size also

corresponds to the findings of Tsiligiris (2015a), who argued that the size of the class for host institution students was more important than for sending institution students at a UK university, although he also found that both sets of students did value small classes.

Interestingly, this was in contrast to students who took part in the pilot study who were completing their final year in the UK at the sending institution. Although not complaining, they talked about the differences of studying in Malaysia and the UK. They talked about much larger classes in the UK with the feeling that they were one of many. Access to lecturers in the UK was more difficult with strict office hours. It took these students a little while to get used to different regimes, but they also talked about some of the advantages of studying in the UK. These advantages included meeting a wide variety of people from different countries, experiencing different teaching methods and gaining a global and international experience.

Most students were concerned about moderation and the effects it might have on their marks. Students from the pilot study discussed some of their issues:

P2	"Because we enter a public university in Malaysia, a government university, so we will only be marked by Malaysian markers, so we don't get opinions from different countries. Our assignments are also regulated by the UK".
P1	"Yes, it's like, we have very different opinion from the UK and Malaysia".
P2	"Yes, we are very scared that our marks will drop. Or hopefully, that our marks will be raised a little bit".
Researcher	"Has that happened?"
P2	"Yes, some of my friends. Their marks have very dropped. It's very heart breaking to see"
Researcher	"So, I guess you are told your marks. But you are told they are not your final marks but that you have to wait for the moderation then the exam boards?"
P2	"I still remember my lecturer saying don't be afraid. Just keep calm".

The moderation is carried out by the sending institution and external examiners to ensure consistency of marking, the correct allocation of grades and feedback to students is effective. In listening to the students, they knew that moderation took place but were less sure of its real purpose. It appeared also, in listening to the

students, that their lecturers would reinforce this almost ‘mysterious’ procedure by telling the students that it was out of their hands. This could be a saving face issue insofar as if a host institution lecturer gave marks to students and then they are changed by the sending institution (or external examiners), it may reflect badly on the lecturer and so their loss of face. This could also be the case at exam boards and in part the result of the cultural consequences of the sometimes lack of confidence of host academics in front of Western colleagues when discussing marks after moderation. The perceived humiliation and loss of face of having marks changed could be devastating to a local lecturer. A sending institution lecturer was keen for the moderation process to be explained and better understood by all, both students and lecturers. They stressed that by explaining why moderation was important (e.g. for fairness and to maintain quality and standards) it might at least allay some fears about the process by both students and staff and reinforce the quality of the programme. What this does illustrate, though, is the importance of understanding the cultural implications of a process when transferred to another country. Mahmud et al. (2010, 1) found in their research on moderation of assessments that, “issues of trust and control, communication and cultural differences”, were challenges to TNE academic staff and made the moderation process more complex. Pyvis and Chapman (2005) also stated that TNE students may experience culture shock when introduced to Western educational systems and processes.

Students from one focus group in my research were concerned about confidentiality issues about the use of student feedback questionnaires and the possible consequences on them if they gave negative feedback about their lecturers. An extract from their discussion is shown below:

FG6A	“We are worried that top management will leak out anything to lecturers. I have heard some cases from my friends they do it, and then lecturers say why do you want to study here then?”
Researcher	“So how have you heard about this? Has this happened at *(host institution)”?*
FG6A	“Yes, my friends have said so”.
Researcher	“So, how do they know that has happened?”
FG6B	“Because the lecturers have been negative towards them. So, if lecturers don’t get support, students may fail modules. That is a consequence (*Nods from other students*)”.

It was a host institution feedback mechanism, not one organised by the sending institution. Confidentiality can be an issue wherever the feedback is sought. What is important is that, whether this group of students is right or wrong, the feedback must be perceived to be confidential to make it worthwhile for all concerned. As Maxwell-Stuart and Huisman (2018, 306) argued, "…if there are not effective feedback mechanisms in place between the university and the TNE students, there can be a sense of out of sight, out of mind". Debowski (2008) recommended better TNE student feedback mechanisms to enhance their learning experience. She also advised that there should on-going research into TNE students' needs and issues, even though this would require additional investment by the sending institution.

Some students did not like group work while others did not like being in groups that were outside of their friendship groups if picked by lecturers. Some students also discussed having challenges with group work with international students in their group, often because of language issues. This may not be that unusual, but some students did see working with international students in group work as a cultural benefit to them and talked quite positively about what they had learnt from working with international students. This was expressed by them talking about how they had helped international students and it had, therefore, helped clarify issues for them as well, or in advice they had received from international students. However, this was at variance to the research by the UK HE International Unit (2013) who found that most TNE students in their study had little interaction with international students on their programme and so had limited chances for intercultural experiences. Most students in my research, when asked about working with sending institution students on line and via Skype on group assignments, were not keen at all. Students explained the reasons for this as not knowing the students, the time differences and the affect it may have on their grades. In some ways this attitude is surprising as students were keen on intercultural learning and global awareness but perhaps it was driven by assessments and the importance of grades rather than the learning opportunities. Bell et al. (2008, 153) argued that, "Carefully nurtured and supported groupwork activities may develop meaningful interaction and cooperation between students of differing cultures" and that intercultural understanding can therefore be promoted and achieved. Bell et al. (2008) understood that intercultural groupwork and engagement is not simple to achieve

and has challenges but if successful will develop international skills and so enhance employment opportunities.

6.4 Behaviour

Behaviour was found to be an important aspect for the participants in my research. Western education is perceived to be prestigious by students, their families and the host academic institution staff. In particular, Western academics are perceived to be of a high-quality and therefore should be highly respected by the host institution. However, the data from my research shows that the relationships in TNE between institutions are often taken for granted and can have important, often negative effects on students and staff.

Loss of face, and shame that came from it, was important to students and staff in my research. Robinson-Plant (2005, 190) defined saving face as, "Maintaining a person's dignity by not humiliating, ridiculing or mocking one, especially in front of others". The findings from my research showed that students in classrooms were conscious of not losing face when asked questions by lecturers and often were quiet. When asked about working with the sending institution students in the UK, on the same programme, students were hesitant, not only because of time differences, but because they did not know them and were not in their friendship groups. As discussed in chapter 4, Arunasalam (2016) argued that Western academics needed to better understand Malaysian students' cultural background of being polite and their silent nature and behaviour, particularly in the classroom. This could be taken further, as Western academics should also understand better the behaviour of Malaysian staff, who, because of their cultural background, were often polite and silent in meetings out of deference to their Western colleagues. The unwillingness to talk out of fear of loss of face as well as deference is a common feature of a collectivist society such as in Malaysia (Eldridge and Cranston, 2009; Hofstede, 2001).

Loss of face for people appears to be an important cultural difference between Malaysia and the UK. Loss of face can affect students as well as staff and if staff are affected by loss of face with their Western colleagues, then this can affect students and their experience. Lie (2004) cited in Robinson-Plant (2005, 190)

pointed out that, “adopting a publicly critical voice is a major challenge for most Malaysians”. Gannon (2001, 258) argued that, “Preserving respect and dignity is fundamental to understanding Malaysians…….and face is the unwritten set of rules that everyone is expected to follow in order to preserve individual dignity and group harmony”. This was borne out by the findings of my research, with host institution staff talking about how they behaved with sending institution staff to avoid any perceived conflict. A host institution academic stated:

> “I think there is still a feeling of superiority because we are not as well established as the UK. But as we have worked along we know it is not perfect, right? But I think the majority of the people here follow the Asian culture of just keeping quiet. Not all, but we have had cases of visitors coming to show they are superior. Which they are not. It is the perception that people have. A lot of it is about personality and how things are viewed in that sense (*quite animated*). Coming back to the Asian culture we just accept it, we might talk about it behind your backs” (H1).

However, this often had consequences with misunderstandings when sending institution staff did not then listen to their colleagues from the host institution.

Quietness of staff and students is linked to loss of face as discussed in chapter 3. Quietness and modesty were highlighted many times in my research with both students and staff. Host institution academics often kept quiet even though they had good practices that they could pass on to the sending institution. Modesty and their cultural background were reasons given. One student, when asked if he felt like a host or a sending institution student and how he described where he was studying to family and friends, said it could be seen as boasting if he said he was a UK University student.

In a host institution staff interview it was said that because of the Malaysian’s modesty and quietness, the sending institution needs to be more proactive in probing host institution staff. This was in relation to what the sending institution could learn from the host institution. It seemed clear from what was being said that there was much the host institution could share with the sending institution if only they were asked appropriately. They said:

> "(*The sending institution*) has good practices and so do we but again I think it goes back to the culture. We have good things, but we are modest. and we just keep quiet. So, it is a cultural thing. But mostly you are here for just a few days, so it is difficult to share. I think this is something we should explore but you need to do a lot more probing" (H2).

Partnerships and partnership workings are about relationships (Keay et al., 2014; Mahmud et al., 2010) and in my research it seemed clear that how the different stakeholders (e.g. parents, students, lecturers, managers, employers) related to each other because of cultural influences was important. For instance, one of the sending institution academics talked about how uncomfortable they sometimes feel in relation to the partnership working between the two institutions because of how some sending institution staff treat the host institution staff. He felt that sometimes the sending institution staff displayed a feeling of superiority over the host institution staff and did not show true partnership working which then has side-effects on the student experience. One sending institution academic talked in their interview about how one should behave but that there is little support or advice given by the sending institution to help staff when they go abroad on partnership visits. It seems likely that if sufficient advice, support and staff development on cultural issues is given to those staff who visit the host institution, then how the two institutions work together may prove more productive because of better understanding in how to deal with misunderstandings.

Lim (2004, 136/137) argued that, "When it comes to the relationship between importer and exporter, trust and respect are identified as the two key factors ensuring effective implementation of the quality assurance processes" and went on to say that, "By and large, quality assurance remains a challenge for the importer and exporter". Mahmud et al. (2010) found that face to face communication was important in relationship building rather than just by video conference or Skype. From listening to the host and sending institution staff in my research, trust and respect were not always there for both sets of academics. The balance of power was unequal, with the sending institution being (or perceived to be) the major partner which at times created tensions and misunderstandings which could then affect the student experience.

It also seemed clear from my research that the role of culture (between the West and Malaysia) was a key issue in helping understand how these relationships worked and could be improved. Misunderstandings were mentioned by both host and sending institution staff between the two cultures. For example, when setting and moderating an assessment. This then had an impact on the student experience who, in the case of moderation, nearly always felt anxiety as marks were sometimes lowered and they did not always understand why.

Gannon (2001) discussed the emphasis on collectivism in Malaysian society. He described Malaysians preferring a participative and collaborative approach rather than confrontation in decision making. Gannon (2001, 258/259) stated that, "In negotiations, compromise and seeking collaboration are preferred to confrontation and a winner-take-all approach…and heated debates tend to be uncommon". The staff from both host and sending institutions in my research talked about how partnership working was sometimes strained because of the different cultural approaches which caused challenges for both sets of staff.

The conflicting relationship between host and sending institution staff can be seen through the dimension of individualism versus collectivism (see paragraph 3.4.5). On the one hand, the sending institution staff were sometimes confused because they thought they had agreement on an issue, and progress would be made only to find out later that this was not the case. For host institution staff, sending institution staff sometimes came over as aggressive, almost neo-colonial in tone, not listening to the views of their Malaysian colleagues. An example of this is shown below from a host institution academic:

> "I think it is about understanding. They could not appreciate. A basic lack of openness to hear the stories on both sides. You can share the same problems, how you resolve things, and it takes time to build. You need people who can open up their eyes. We have some who say I'm right, you are wrong. It boils down to the people and who can see there are different ways of doing things and coming together in a joint process. It can feel that (*host institution*) staff's academic integrity is being attacked. So, we say I don't want any problems, so I will just agree with you rather than saying that is the style/way we want to do it. It can create a real feeling of tension. And then I don't like you as you have no respect for me. But I will do what you say because if my assessments don't get approved……" (H1).

It appeared from my research that the effects of this cultural dimension, with both societies almost diametrically opposed, was important in understanding behaviour and that a better and closer understanding of the cultural values of each society would help ameliorate some of the challenges faced by students and staff from Malaysia and the UK.

6.5 Identity

Identity in how and why students (and staff) identify with the host and sending institutions and the implications for their experience in studying (and working) at the host institution and/or in the UK was found to be an important aspect to the participants in my research. The implications impact on how students feel about either institution, their expectations and their feelings towards both institutions, including the cultural and intercultural impact and issues that may arise from their experiences and expectations.

Hohner and Tsigaris (2012) argued that students' perception of quality is important but little research has been carried out on their experience. In my research most of the students did not talk directly about the quality of the franchise programme but in conversation they knew the value of a Western degree for their future employment. This links with Bourdieu's (1996) theoretical concept of capital, habitus and field and the importance of family discussed in chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter. Many students also talked about the good standard of teaching they received on the franchise programme. Host institution staff talked about parents of students not always being that interested in the quality of the programme as such but were more interested in their children passing the Western course for better future employment opportunities, in Malaysia and abroad. The badge of a Western degree seemed to be the most important thing to many students and their families which would help ensure the accumulation of capital (Bourdieu, 1996).

The qualification for a franchise degree should be of comparable quality to the sending institution's programme offered in the UK, but the student experience may not be (Hill et al., 2014). Pyvis and Chapman (2004) found that demand by students in their research was not driven by a superior quality of the degree programmes but more by the desire for an international and Western education. They raised the issue

that in the future the belief in a country having a superior product may backfire on the country if the demands by students are only searching for a Western and international education.

The host and sending institution academics in my research believed that their TNE programmes are of high-quality. Bailey and Ingimundardottir (2015, 52) also found that students felt that an international qualification was, "the hallmark of quality" and getting a British degree, "gave them higher status in the job market than if they had a degree from elsewhere". The UK HE International Unit (2013) stated that students found TNE programmes an achievable way of gaining a UK degree and thought it of high value to them and employers. Just like in my research, the UK HE International Unit. (2013) found that TNE students perceived UK degrees were overall of high-quality rather than concentrating on how they were taught or the detailed contents of the programme, or indeed whichever UK institution. However, a group of second year students in my research, seemed to be accepting that the franchise programme delivered in Malaysia would be of less quality than the same programme delivered in the UK. But no other student group talked about the franchise programme directly in this way. In fact, most students recognised that studying at the host institution on a UK franchised degree was of great value to them and their families and for their future employment and careers. This is in line with recent research that the UK's HE qualifications were perceived internationally to be of high-quality giving academic rigour and so are of a high value to employers (IFF Research, 2018). However, Hoare (2012, 274) argued that for Australian TNE programmes, "…there has been a complacent, if not arrogant, assumption …..that the success of offshore programmes can be attributed to quality, prestige, and the desire for a superior Western education". It appeared from my research that family pride, prestige and status of the Malaysian family accessing a UK qualification seemed to be more important than the quality assurance processes that were advertised by both the host and sending institutions as making the franchise programmes high-quality.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most students in my research felt that they were more a host institution student than a sending institution student. Some did feel a joint

loyalty to both the host and sending institutions while a small minority of students felt they belonged more to the sending institution.

Seawright and Hodges (2016, v) argued that there are many factors why students choose to study at an institution. These include, they argued, how comfortable they feel with the culture of the host country, the chances of employment and their convenience. These factors were also found to be of relevance in my research, for TNE students in Malaysia. However, as Seawright and Hodges (2016, v) also argued, students may not feel that they belong to an institution because "different dialects or expectation of English fluency can prevent students from moving forward in the curriculum". Some students in my research did talk about the difficulty with the standard of their English and how it affected their TNE journey. Sending institution staff also talked about how many host institution staff and students spoke and wrote Malaysian English, which sometimes caused challenges and misunderstandings.

In research carried out by the British Council, it was found that, "TNE students display more allegiance to each other and the programme than their (*sending*) university" (Malik 2012, 1). This also appeared to be the case in my research and may not be too surprising because of the large distance between the two institutions and the apparent lack of close attention by the sending institution, apart from link tutor and occasional visits by other staff. A host institution academic did make a critical comment about their students compared to other franchise programme students concerning their commitment and their complacency. This did not emerge from the discussion with the students in the focus groups, perhaps because they were the most engaged students who had volunteered to be part of the study. However, if the view of the host institution academic was true for most of their students, then this may shed some light on why students' identity was more with the host institution as they had little interest or energy to find out more about the sending institution.

Debowski (2008) recommended much better support for TNE students by the sending institution to help their well-being and identity, including cultural association and greater contact with lecturers and other staff at the sending

institution. As discussed in chapter 3, Keay et al. (2014) found that some staff at institutions did not know about TNE or that the sending institution had their students studying overseas. A lack of overall awareness of TNE by key stakeholders was also a finding by Knight and McNamara (2015). O'Mahony (2014) stated that, "How can an offshore student feel a sense of belonging to an institution when the institution's outward-facing staff do not know they exist?" In fact, O'Mahony (2014) recommended that all sending institution staff should be aware of the nature, extent and purpose of their institution's TNE delivery in order to support their students studying in another country. Keevers et al. (2014, 246) argued that there would be benefits for both lecturers and students if lecturers from both the host and sending institutions worked and collaborated together "…to develop a sense of belonging to a TNE teaching team". Keevers et al. (2014, 246) went on to argue that, "Strengthening social relations and trust amongst TNE teaching team members enhances their capacity to create collaborative learning spaces amongst students…". They argued that to help achieve this, staff development for both institutions needs to be designed and negotiated collaboratively, not imposed from above.

Hill et al. (2014) also found, as in my research, that although most students, with the support of their families, wish to have an international and global education, many have little understanding of TNE and what it consists of, apart from it is linked to a Western university. Hill et al. (2014) also argued that because there is no common understanding of what is meant by TNE in the international HE sector, then it is not too surprising that students and their families do not necessarily understand what TNE is and how it operates.

In terms of where host institution staff identify, it was stated by one host institution staff member that many staff felt that they were not being recognised enough by the sending institution. Although they did all or most of the teaching and assessment on the TNE programmes, it was thought that host institution staff felt that they should be better recognised by the sending institution staff for the good work that they did. This, they thought, would then have a positive effect on the TNE students and their families. Opportunities for visits, exchanges and secondments by host institution staff to the UK may provide benefits for both institutions and also help

develop as sense of staff identity with the host institution as might collaborative research opportunities (Smith, 2017).

Although Maxwell-Stuart and Huisman, (2018, 307) urged caution on their findings, they argued that, "Given the considerable distance often between TNE and the parent institution……there needs to be greater focus from institution and staff on how to engage transnational students as a unique student community". As part of this student community, the students need to find their voice within their own cultural arena to ensure that they have a say in how the programme and their TNE journey provides them with a high-quality student experience. This needs to move from a more passive stage to active participation, acknowledging the Malaysian culture and how things happen in that country. However, it appeared that on lots of occasions, in listening to students in my research, that they had not seen or met the link tutor or other sending institution academics when they had visited and that this needed to change in order for students to make their voice known to the sending institution, as well as the host institution. Alam et al. (2013, 280) also found that, "cooperation between partners is crucial to overcoming the barrier of cultural differences". Alam et al. (2013) argued that to achieve this, the needs of both institutions need to be taken into account by having a collaborating mentality with the need to compromise when necessary to aid conflict resolution. They also argued that to aid conflict resolution the culture of the host country needs to be understood by cross-cultural training for the sending institution staff.

Klemencic (2016) discussed students developing a sense of belonging to their university and argued it can be defined as:

> "……a student's perceptions of intimate association with the university: to feel a central and important part of the university and a sense of ownership of their university, each of which fulfils their human need for inclusion, acceptance and efficacy. These in turn strengthen students' sense of responsibility to the university; evoke university citizenship and even expectation of having a voice and being involved".

Because of distance to the sending institution, a sense of belonging to the sending institution by TNE students can be difficult and raises challenges (Smith, 2017). Smith (2017) suggested a number of ways a sense of belonging can be achieved

including giving sending institution merchandise to TNE students and encouraging group work between TNE students and home students. However, these all can have challenges as well (see above for a discussion on group work).

The wish by students to want to study a Western degree is in line with the arguments put forward by Sybrandt and Thogerson (2015). They argued that the decisions taken by students and their families were influenced by their views of what they thought of as a global education. Sybrandt and Thogerson (2015, 3) called this a 'moral' geography that describes the perception where the most valuable knowledge and qualifications can be located by symbolically ordering nations on a global map. The findings from my research are also in alignment with the findings of Chapman and Pyvis (2005) and Pyvis and Chapman (2007) who found that TNE students chose an international education as an investment and mainly as a passport to getting a successful career and which could be used overseas. The accumulation of capital was important to them (Bourdieu, 1996). Tsiligiris (2015) argued that TNE students now have changing expectations and just getting a foreign university degree is not a sufficient selling point. However, that was not the finding from my research, but students did have high expectations from the host institution itself.

It was clear that the students and their parents in my research valued a UK education and degree, particularly because of the historical and colonial link of Malaysia with the UK but also because of the status, global recognition and perceived high quality of UK degrees globally and, therefore, the symbolic capital it gave to students (Bourdieu, 1996). Most students believed that a UK TNE degree would give them the education and professional skills which would enable them to gain employment in good jobs and so valuable cultural capital and dispositions to better themselves (Bourdieu, 1984). It should be noted, however, as a sending institution academic stated, "They are very patriotic, actually, they love their country, but the recognition of a Western degree is important. If they want to work abroad, then a Western degree will do" (S3).

Sin et al. (2019, 140), in their research, argued that:

> "Much of the participants' preference for UK TNE stemmed from habitus, an ingrained structure of perceptions which naturalises the superiority and

> distinctiveness of certain standards, in this case, British standards. The participants' evaluations of study destinations, modes of international education, academic institutions and subject areas were mostly impressionistic. What mattered most to them was that they would or had already obtained a UK tertiary qualification. Cultural capital in its institutionalised form was believed to be enough to position them advantageously for highly paid jobs and status".

Bourdieu (1996) acknowledged, however, that in the acquisition of capital, there are other forces at work that can give advantages to families other than just academic qualifications. Bourdieu (1996, 319) argued that:

> "We thus see that even though academic titles can provide access to positions of economic power, the school-mediated mode of reproduction remains in head-to-head competition with the familial mode of reproduction, even in sectors that are most positively disposed to its effects, such as top bureaucratic companies. In addition to the fact that the cultural training provided by the most deeply rooted bourgeois families provides access to a large proportion of the dominant positions in and of itself, it alone provides the very particular form of cultural capital (deportment, manners, accent) and the social capital that, when combined with inherited economic capital, or even without it, give a person an advantage over rivals endowed with academically equivalent or even superior titles".

There can be accusations that TNE reinforces a neo-colonial attitude by imposing a Western approach. This is discussed in chapter 4. Hoare (2010) argued this is often not intended or conscious. Hoare (2010, 47) argued that it often results from a lack of consideration by the sending institution and lack of resources in preparation resulting in what she calls, "unconscious educational imperialism". From the findings of my research, it appears to be a more complicated picture. All students in this research wanted a Western education and a British degree, even if they could not visit and study in the UK. Host institution staff in my research talked about how important it was for them to advertise and promote their courses as international and British in response to the prospective students and their families' wishes.

Some contextualising of the curriculum in the host institution's programme was needed, such as the use of Malaysian law or more local and regional examples and case studies, but students (and their families) and staff wanted the same product that was offered in the UK. A host academic thought that this created a fine balance

between contextualising the programme to Malaysia's requirements and having a UK degree that can be sold to the students and their families. In the host academic's opinion, it was important to have as near a programme to that what was offered in the UK. Students and their families, in the host institution academic's view, did not see this as a form of neo-colonialism but rather the product that they wanted to buy. A host institution academic confirmed this view by stating, "A Western university, like in the UK, gives prestige value. So, if you have the name of a British university it is a good thing in Malaysia" (H3).

This also agrees with the research of Knight and McNamara (2014) who found that TNE students were not concerned about the possible Western-centric curriculum and not sensitive to local context and culture. Hill et al. (2014, 962) argued that, "Academic programmes are the products of different sociological systems, each with a distinctive set of values which are imparted through academic curriculum contents". They discussed tensions that may arise from these different systems, such as individual rights from a UK standpoint and emphasis, from Malaysia's standpoint, of compliance with rules and behaviour. Waterval et al. (2015) concluded from their study that straight copying of curricula is not wise or feasible and copy-pasting is bound to end in failure. Waterval et al. (2015, 67) argued that, "Transposing a curriculum in its entirety to a context for which it was not designed and where it will be delivered by staff that were not involved in its construction is a delicate process". This also accords with the research of Caruana and Montgomery (2015) who found that TNE programmes tend not to be as adaptive to local needs and thus the students' needs. Wang (2008) also argued that it may be a problem to transfer Western approaches without paying attention to the local environment and cultures. Djerasimovic (2014, 212) argued, however, that a more nuanced and flexible approach was required in the thinking about the cultural differences and power balance in TNE as, "Any sort of transformation will not be confined to one side only". It seemed, at least from the findings of my research, that this was not, however, a problem for the students (and their families) with this franchise programme as they wanted a UK product. Interestingly, Hodson and Thomas (2010), commenting on the UK situation, recognised a tension between localising and adapting programmes to reflect the culture of the host countries and what the students may want, a UK experience and a UK award. However, it is

difficult to give a full UK experience because the students are not physically studying in the UK. The Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students (2014, 22) were keen to ensure that TNE students receive an equitable experience with those in the UK and believed this was important if the UK TNE brand was to expand globally. They argued that, "Systems for engaging students in the assurance and enhancement of their course at programme level should be established….".

A further issue from the findings of my research was that the partnership working was not always successful, often because of cultural differences and misunderstandings, and because of the imbalance of power in the partnership. This tension had impacts on the students and their HE journey. It may be that further work will be needed to get the full potential out of TNE partnerships and ensure that the host and sending institutions collaborate much more on an equal basis (Smith, 2010).

O'Mahony (2014, 10) identified a British Council pilot study which discussed concerns about, "Western-centric" programmes and suggested that TNE may be "exacerbating the brain drain" of the host country. The UK HE International Unit. (2013) also discussed TNE and the possible brain drain and argued it may become a global issue rather than one for just developing countries. However, the UK HE International Unit. (2013, 19) also stated that countries such as Malaysia, "….pull in a complementary direction as they implement immigration policies to reverse the brain drain, such as tax breaks and jobs for returning students and expatriates in Malaysia". Alam et al. (2013) also argued that TNE reduces the possibility of a brain drain as well as developing local skills, reducing capital outflow and the burden on the local HEIs. From my research, however, acknowledging that it is only a relatively small study, although part of a bigger picture, a possible brain drain did not appear to be a problem. Nearly all the students wanted experience of working abroad after they had graduated, but most wanted to return to Malaysia, talking about home and their family as important factors in this. However, Healey and Michael (2015) asserted, TNE could reduce risk of brain drain for the host country because students who travel abroad for their studies are more likely to want to stay abroad. But Healey and Michael (2015) also acknowledged that TNE

students who may not have accessed HE, if not for TNE, could then want to travel abroad for employment. This is partially the case from the findings of my research, but all students in the study said that they wanted to return home after they had gained experience from working abroad.

Most students from my research wanted to move abroad after they had graduated, at least for a limited time, to gain employment and experiences of other cultures, and this mobility would help them gain social and economic capital. Waters and Leung (2017, 164) discussed the importance of employment and alumni networks and stated that:

> "…social capital developed through HE (both within university and subsequently through alumni networks and resources) can have a direct and substantive impact upon employment…and so opportunities for social mobility, both within, and beyond East Asia".

Mellors-Bourne (2017) found that there was limited social development impact by TNE graduates and relatively few were active within international networks of alumni. The host institution from my research does have a host institution alumni network but not a sending institution alumni association operating in Malaysia. The link to the sending institution of the graduates from the franchise programme may be enhanced if there is a sending institution alumni, actively supported by both institutions.

A similarity of my research to the study of Waters and Leung (2013) are the visits of external examiners to the host institution to moderate assessments and attend exam boards but who do not then meet students. This is partly because of their limited stay in Malaysia and that this is all done within inter-semester gaps when most students are away. However, it would be helpful if external examiners could see students, albeit in small groups of local students who could attend, to not only give the students a voice to the external examiners but also help students accumulate capital. Waters and Leung (2013) also found for their study that students liked taking photographs with British academics when they visited and at graduation ceremonies. This was also found with students (and their families) in my research.

Sin (2013) also found that there were disadvantages of not being exposed to the UK environment overseas, with no direct knowledge of life in UK. Sin (2013, 857) argued that, "All in all, being physically distant from the core of global knowledge production system, that is the West – came with perceived limitations in term of the accumulation of marketable, high-status embodied cultural capital and personal enrichment". However, a key difference from my research is that students have the opportunity to visit the sending institution in the UK on a SAP, to study all of the final year or go on a field visit, unlike the students from the research of Waters and Leung (2013). One of the sending institution academics estimated about 10% of the TNE students took advantage of these opportunities whilst the rest had only limited mobility abroad. Caruana and Montgomery (2015) argued that there is an association between mobility and the accumulation of social and cultural capital and so for those students who do not travel abroad, this may be a disadvantage. Wallace and Dunn (2008) also queried whether TNE students, as opposed to students who study abroad participate as fully in the social and economic capital that they wished for.

There is limited contact with the sending institution's academic staff in my study, as with the research of Waters and Leung (2013), as most teaching is carried out by the host institution with local lecturers. However, many of the lecturers in my research are well qualified up to masters and doctoral level, have studied abroad and many obtained Western qualifications. This is in line with the MQA requirements on staff suitability and qualifications. According to Ackers (2012) even brief trips from sending institution lecturers can help in knowledge transfer and thus the accumulation of capital that students seek. However, Ackers (2012) also argued that such trips should be integrated, well organised and coordinated with the host institution in advance so that they can promote the accumulation of capital. From the findings of my research, such limited short-term visits and stays by the sending institution staff were not always integrated and well planned with limited teaching, apart from guest lectures from the sending institution staff, which many students were not aware of, and did not attend anyway.

From the research carried out by the UK International Unit (2016), TNE students generally rank developing intercultural competence highly. Many students in my

research thought that having a global education, through studying on a Western degree, was important in order to gain experience of other cultures and intercultural skills. This international outlook and gaining intercultural skills whilst studying on a TNE programme is consistent with the findings of Knight and McNamara (2015) in their research. The students in my research and in the research of Knight and McNamara (2015) were of the opinion that studying on a Western degree and having an international outlook were what employers were looking for. Knight and McNamara (2014) found that international outlook and intercultural awareness and competence were rated very highly by TNE students. The importance of a global education and awareness of global issues was highlighted by Seawright and Hodges (2016, ix) who argued that:

> "The impact of globalisation on students' growing ability to see, identify and define issues and process that may have gone unnoticed without Western education and its relentlessly probing, questioning nature".

The importance of a Western education in giving TNE students a global awareness and opportunities to study and/or work abroad cannot, therefore, be overestimated and many students in my research acknowledged this.

In line with the exploratory study of Eldridge and Cranston (2009) who investigated Australian and Thai relationships, and using the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011), it appears that national culture does play an important part in the management of TNE programmes in my research. In particular, as in the findings of Eldridge and Cranston (2009), it was shown from this research that both host and sending institution staff spoke about national cultural differences between Malaysia and the UK impacting on how the franchise was managed. It can, therefore, be argued that the cultural differences between countries from my research do play a significant part in impacting on the student TNE journey.

From my research, students had access to a number of working and friendship groups throughout their studies and acknowledged the importance of such friendships. However, students were reluctant, when asked, to work with sending institution students. They spoke about the time differences and the worry of not knowing the UK students and the effects this might have on their grades. Students

are able, however, to take part in social and group activities, sporting activities and volunteering opportunities in order to gain new experiences which may enhance social capital whilst studying in Malaysia. Bailey and Ingimundardottir (2015, 53) asserted that:

> "We know from previous studies that middle-class students are better at transforming educational qualifications into economic advantage than working-class students, and that their extracurricular activities lie at the heart of this as a result of their contribution to students' cultural capital".

Eldridge and Cranston (2009) also found in their research that the social impact for students on the TNE programme (in contrast to the home programme in Australia) was important. Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015) found that extra-curricular activities were rarely mentioned by respondents and volunteering and, internships and work placements were very rare. The UK HE International Unit (2013) in their research also found that TNE students had little or no experience getting involved in extra-curricular activities such as volunteering or student societies. However, they noted that in Malaysia there was strong employer engagement which accorded with my findings.

6.6 Returning to the research questions

The three research questions at the heart of my research study arose from, and were shaped by, the current gaps in the research literature relating to the student voice and their experiences whilst on their TNE journey. The methodology employed to answer the research questions was that of qualitative research using thematic analysis drawing on host institution student focus groups, and host and sending institutions' individual staff interviews. Through the vivid depiction of the student voices on their TNE journey, this research has found that the role of culture has played a significant part in the TNE journey of students at the Malaysian private college on their UK franchised degree. The research has also found that the staff who are involved in TNE at the host and sending institutions are also affected by culture which in turn can have a significant effect on students as part of their TNE experiences. The themes that have emerged from the data are 1) family 2) learning and teaching 3) behaviour and 4) identity. The answers to the research questions are outlined below following the findings in chapter 5 and the discussion of the

findings through, in particular, the lens of Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical concepts of capital, field, and habitus as well as other key authors.

6.6.1 What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?

Most students spoke of their positive experiences whilst studying at the host institution on a UK franchised degree. The most important issue for this group of students was that it was a UK or Western university they wanted to study on and so long as the teaching was good and they could get good jobs at the end, then they were satisfied. Many students and their parents believed that so long as it was a UK university the college was linked to, it would be of high-quality. The link to a UK university was, therefore, a key selling point to many students and their families.

Students in my research spoke about their satisfaction with their full-time lecturers and how they were taught, although they also raised some challenges with part time lecturers. Students appreciated that their lecturers knew them and their names, and students knew their lecturers. A number of the students had progressed through from the foundation or diploma routes at the same institution, so they had a chance to build these relationships before the start of their HE journey. Students spoke about the college being a friendly place with easy access to lecturing and administrative staff if they had questions or issues they wanted resolving. The students also spoke about the advantage of small classes in which everyone knew each other.

No student talked about wanting the curriculum or teaching to be localised in such a way as to move it substantially away from being a UK degree. In fact, the students and their families wanted the full UK experience even though that would always be difficult because of the location of the place of study, in a different country, many miles away from the sending institution, with a very different culture. No student mentioned anything directly about neo-colonial issues or was critical in any way of their Western learning experience. Indeed, they appeared to want this Western experience even more by having at least some teaching from Western academics from the sending institution.

Most of the students identified more with the host institution whilst studying in Malaysia rather than the sending institution There were some students who identified with both institutions and a minority identifying with the sending institution. Many students wanted a more Western and UK experience and would have like more teaching and other contact from the sending institution

Students were concerned about issues with part-time lecturers. Some students thought that part-time lecturers are not always good at teaching and explaining academic issues as well as not always as available to them as full-time lecturers as they were only contracted for certain hours every week. Students were also concerned that part-time lecturers did not always fully understand or know about the regulations and procedures of the sending institution so could not fully advise students about them.

Some students mentioned perceived confidentiality issues with the host institution student feedback mechanisms and were reluctant to give honest feedback because of fear of any negative comeback from their lecturers if they criticised them

Many students had limited contact with sending institution staff. For instance, only a few students had met the link tutor on their regular visits to the host institution, but most had not. In fact, some students did not know that there was a link tutor from the sending institution and what they did. Listening to the students their dentification with the sending institution is limited, even though in recent times a floor on the main campus at the host institution was dedicated to the sending institution. Pictures of the sending institution and those of key staff were on the walls of this dedicated floor.

Many students had a perception that there are not always clear instructions from the sending institution to the host institution, such as the setting and moderating of assessments. The moderation and possible changing of marks caused anxiety to many students, and the lecturing staff. Sending institution staff mentioned that the host institution staff could lose face in front of their students or colleagues (and sending institution staff) if assignments were downgraded. Indeed, many students

were not sure what the moderation process is and why it is necessary, although they know moderation takes place

Some students spoke about the challenges of working with some international students because of their poor English language skills (although some students talked also about how much they had benefitted by working with international students). Some local students talked about how they struggled sometimes because they did not, they felt, have a sufficient grasp of the English language; and that there were sometimes misunderstandings because of language issues between students (and staff) at both institutions

There are mixed findings in the literature as to whether TNE students have a good experience. For instance, Pyvis and Chapman (2007) found that most students had a positive TNE experience. Hoare (2012) discussed the transformative effect that TNE education can have on students. Milliszewska and Sztendur (2012) also found that TNE students considered their programmes worthwhile and effective. Mellors-Bourne (2017) found that TNE graduates mainly reported a positive impact on their careers and job prospects but there were also some graduates who did not have a positive experience or outcome. However, there are other studies, such as Waters and Leung (2013), where students were not getting a satisfactory experience. Sin et al. (2019, 142) found that, "The Malaysian participants who studied in franchised programmes particularly felt distanced and detached from a UK and international study experience" which is partly true from my research although students did feel they were getting a global education. Sin et al. (2019) and Pyvis and Chapman (2007) also found in their research that many students acknowledged the importance of proximity of campus to home rather than programme selection, highlighting the importance of studying close to home and family. Again, this is in line with the findings from my research where many students wanted to study close to home and family.

Healey and Michael (2015) found that TNE was cheaper for students to study in their own country, being more accessible HE for students who cannot study abroad (e.g. for finance or visas issues, family or cultural reasons). They also found that students' preferences and motivations for TNE included convenience (they could

keep their job whilst studying, avoid time/cost of international travelling, live with their family); lower tuition fees, low cost of living, safety with stable governments, modern amenities, similar culture and religion, freedom from discrimination, reputation and quality, and international recognition of qualifications. Milliszewska and Sztendur (2012) also found that the flexibility of the programme structure, the relevance to jobs and careers, studying on a Western degree without having to leave their home country, and the high status of Western universities were benefits identified by students. All these findings are similar with the findings of my research and confirm that student can have positive experiences whilst on their TNE but accepting that there can also be challenges for students.

6.6.2 Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?

As Bourdieu (1996) argued, the more access and acquisition of cultural capital by an individual, the greater their chances of success and position in the social structure and students and their families in my research understood this by wishing to gain a British and Western education and degree certificate. Most students in my research talked about the value to them and their families of studying on a UK TNE franchise programme in Malaysia, although some students did also raise issues about the value as well. There were a number of reasons that students gave for valuing studying on a UK franchise degree. Most students acknowledged that getting a badge of a UK or Western university was the most important thing for them. Students also spoke about the importance of getting an international and global education. It appeared important for the students (and their families) to have the experience of the UK degree and an intercultural experience to advance their career and job prospects

Students also spoke about the value of opportunities to study in the UK as part of the franchise programme or visit on a study tour. However, most students would probably not take up these opportunities because of financial and/or family constraints. This was also linked to opportunities to work abroad for periods of time to enhance their careers after they graduate.

The opportunity to study a wide choice of business subjects on their franchise programme was raised by students. Some students said this was one of the reasons why they chose to study at the host institution on a franchise degree and was of key importance to them.

Many students spoke about the good value and affordable fees at the host institutions and the discounted fees if students continued their studies from the foundation or diploma routes.

Studying on an employer focussed programme and the benefit of employer engagement whilst they are studying were mentioned by many students in what they valued and thought important. The opportunities to work and study with international students on their course in Malaysia and so better understand cultural issues was also talked about positively, although some students did see challenges in this as well.

Good transport links and travel arrangements to and from the college were mentioned by some students, although a few students did raise parking as a problem at and around the college.

Many students acknowledged the importance of gaining other skills, not just academic knowledge on the franchise programme. Many talked about an international outlook and exposure as important. Some students talked about extra curricula activities as being important such as community engagement and sports. These were encouraged by the host institution whilst studying on the franchise programme

All students wanted to better themselves, often for family reasons. The accumulation of capital was important to them although it may take some time for them to know how successful this has been, after graduation. Most students think the franchise degree is valuable to them in gaining this social and economic capital. Although host institution staff thought that these franchise programmes from the UK that they taught on and managed were of a high-quality some students did not share this view. In part, it appeared from some students that as the programmes

were taught in Malaysia, and not in the UK, this might affect the quality of the programmes

Hill et al. (2014, 952) stated that, "TNE is both a product and an instrument of the globalisation process". The importance placed on a global and international education by TNE students and their families is a key finding from my research. Sin (2013, 858) argued that for, "Some students, TNE geographically and morally suited them" because of various family commitments and financial constraints and that they got the best of both worlds by studying TNE in Malaysia. This was also the findings from my research.

Pyvis and Chapman (2007) found that it was important to TNE students in choosing an international education. They found that students felt international equated with quality. However, Pyvis and Chapman (2007, 245) also found that, "For Malaysian students, in particular, an international education was preferably Western because careers were frequently planned in Western corporations operating in Malaysia". Students, in their research, believed international employers would prefer to hire Malaysian graduates with international qualifications. Pyvis and Chapman (2007) also found that students chose an international education, not because of the quality education of a Western university but because it was international, and so marketing quality of the institutions and programmes was, therefore, less important to these students. This was in accordance with the findings of my research where the acquisition of a Western certificate was paramount. Mellors-Bourne (2015, 22) found in their research of TNE alumni that studying abroad was seen as the "gold standard". They also found that TNE degrees were less valued than local degrees and that TNE was seen to reinforce social inequality and exclusion, so TNE students were "different and inferior". However, they found that many TNE alumni were in employment. In my research, many students did see studying abroad as their first option, but it proved difficult for financial and other reasons, and they saw TNE as a good second best and not inferior, particularly on a British degree.
As discussed in chapter 3, Waterval et al. (2015, 78) found that:

> "……a blunt copying of curricula does not seem a wise nor feasible strategy. Although the curriculum aims to deliver a comparable educational quality to home and host students, its "copy" in the host institution needs thorough

> adaptation and a culturally sensitive implementation strategy before it can be adopted by the host institution and adopted in a different environment".

However, this is at variance to my findings. The students in my research, were keen to study the UK, Western qualification and did not want a different product. As Healey and Michael stated, TNE could be seen as a new form of colonialism because of the flow from Western to developing countries but the demand for TNE is created by students wanting Western educational and social experiences.

King (2010) queried whether students would need to study abroad on a western degree rather than at home on a TNE programme for the accumulation of capital they desired. He noted that studying abroad would give students access to networks, connections, foreign languages and an understanding of intercultural awareness. Although acknowledging that not all TNE programmes are the same and are not necessarily all of high quality, from my research the students did have opportunities to accumulate capital through the SAP programme, the exposure to different cultures and languages and access to the 'grand corps' (Bourdieu, 1996) by means of the host institute alumni. It is difficult to know if they would have accumulated the same amount of social capital and been as successful if they had studied abroad. Turnbull et al. (2019, 5) argued that:

> "The value of capital is not solely determined by form, but also by factors such as the manner of acquisition, and the personal characteristics of the owner. Issues emerge when an individual's capital is devalued unjustly by the 'rules' operating in the field".

It may be then that TNE degrees could be worth less (see Waters and Leung, 2013) but from my research, students, and particularly staff, believed that employers liked the TNE degree from the host institution which then enabled students to accumulate social capital which would enhance their life chances and experiences.

6.6.3 What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience?

A number of areas were identified that could be learnt from the student experiences from my research including listening to TNE students more, understanding the

importance of culture, the importance of family on students' lives, and the importance of partnership working to ensure a good TNE student experience. The need for both the host and sending institutions to continually listen to the TNE students (and TNE staff) and act on issues as soon as possible.

An understanding of the cultural issues and sensitivities is of paramount importance in delivering a high-quality student experience. That cultural issues from both countries are understood by all staff. Understanding the behaviour of students and staff because of cultural differences is vital and so staff for all staff involved in TNE is important.

The importance of family in Malaysian society and the effects on student behaviours should be understood. Deference, family pride and prestige were found to be important to Malaysian students and their families and this can affect how people behave. The family has been shown to be important in the decision making for Malaysian students.

Partnership working and relationships were found to be important. Frequent misunderstandings and tensions on both sides were encountered because of not always understanding each other's culture and background. The development of communities of practice between UK and Malaysian students, and UK and Malaysian staff may help how they all study or work together and how conflicts and misunderstandings can be resolved

Host institution staff did not always feel recognised by the sending institution for their hard work in teaching on the franchise programmes and the support they gave to students. The sending institution (with the host institution) may wish, therefore, to review how staff can feel recognised and appreciated.

The host institution has extensive employer engagement activities with local employers as well as offering internships to students. Although the sending institution is well known in the UK for employability, it may be that there are lessons that can be transferred to the UK.

A number of students spoke about the importance of gaining other skills, not just academic, including an international outlook and exposure. Some students also talked about the value of taking part in sporting activities as well as community engagement activities to enhance their skills base and knowledge.

It is important to listen to students and staff from other cultures such as in Malaysia and probe more, as one host institution academic advised, because of their quietness, to gain much more out of the partnership.

Tsiligiris (2015b) argued that both the sending and host institutions should work together in a meaningful endeavour to ensure that the student expectations are met. He called this two-way approach as 'flipped TNE'. There may have been greater opportunities for both the host and sending institutions to enhance and develop teaching practices in a transformative way but on the franchise degree in my study there was little or no sending institution teaching on the programme so this was not possible (Smith, 2017; Caruana and Montgomery, 2015). This was echoed by Sin et al. (2019) who found that the absence of close contact with the UK lecturers was seen by students as a weakness of the franchise programme.

6.7 Summary of the chapter

My research has provided an in-depth insight into the student perceptions and experiences whilst on their TNE journey in Malaysia and the value they place on these experiences. This chapter has examined and discussed the findings of each theme and the overarching theme of culture. The findings, in particular, were discussed in relation to Bourdieu's (1996) theoretical concept of capital, habitus and field. The answers to the research questions were then set out and discussed highlighting, in particular, the important role of the family and the impact of culture on the students (and staff).

The next chapter concludes this thesis sets out the limitations to this research study. It suggests further research that would be worthwhile in continuing the focus on the experiences, views and perceptions of TNE students and other key stakeholders in TNE. The contribution to original and professional knowledge will be stressed and a brief summary of the findings will be outlined. Recommendations are suggested

to improve professional practice and policy in relation to TNE. This final chapter will then end with concluding remarks, stressing the importance of the TNE student voice.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

"Culture is the collective habits of a group. Even book smart people tend to go brain dead under the sway of their cultures." (Manji, 2019, 25/26)

7.1 Introduction

Mizzi (2015, 1) argued that, "The phenomenon of transnational education creates the potential to research unique educational experiences". This has been true with my research with the aim of exploring, in-depth, perceptions and experiences of host students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking UK franchise programmes in Malaysia. The research aimed to understand the complexity and richness of students' perceptions, with every human experience being unique and the truth relative. The research sought reality of practice from real people in real educational settings in Malaysia focusing on the meanings of that reality of the participants. The focus groups and individual interviews gave a holistic picture of student and staff perceptions and views which allowed the building of rich local insights and understanding that they raised and their life and world experiences. The value of focus groups and interviews was such that it allowed for this deep understanding, particularly as there were a rich mix of cultures and nationalities who took part in this research

TNE will continue to expand and grow, particularly with International Branch Campuses (IBC) and distance education with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), along with the continued demand in Asia and elsewhere (UK HE International Unit, 2018). It is, therefore, important that the student view is listened to, understood and taken account of, to ensure a high-quality student experience.

This chapter sets out limitations to the research and suggests further research that would be worthwhile in continuing the focus on the experiences and views of TNE students and other key stakeholders in TNE. The contribution to original and professional knowledge will be stressed. Recommendations are put forward that have emerged from the answering of the research questions which will help improve

professional practice, advise policy makers in relation to TNE, and enhance the student experience. The final part of this chapter and thesis ends with concluding remarks and stresses the importance of the TNE student voice being heard.

7.2 Limitations to this research study

In this section, issues concerning the sample of participants, the participating institutions, the geographical scope and scale of the study are discussed. In addition, there are methodological issues, including the research design, approach and my own positionality that need to be noted.

As with any empirical study of this scale, there are limitations of the research that need to be considered. The study was conducted on only full-time, relatively young students who were on undergraduate business UK franchised programmes in Malaysia. This is at variance to many TNE students who tend to be older with previous employment experience before studying, many working full-time during their studies (Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015; Knight and McNamara, 2015). Older, working students on undergraduate and post graduate programmes were not, therefore, part of this research. Nor were other forms of TNE such as students at IBCs or on externally validated TNE programmes. The study was also based on one UK sending institution and it may be that different findings would have emerged from different sending universities in the UK or in other parts of the world, such as sending institutions from the USA or Australia. Lectures on the franchise programmes, as part of this research, were also taught by local, host institution lecturers and not on a flying faculty basis.

The research was also limited in geographical scope as it only dealt with TNE programmes in Malaysia. All host countries are not the same. For instance, Malaysia is now a key educational hub and highly regulated by the MQA. The student experiences and journeys are, therefore, likely to be different in some other countries, particularly those with less regulated educational regimes.

There can be criticisms and limitations to an interpretive approach to research and these are discussed in more detail in chapter 4. These criticisms involve interpretivism being too vague and too variable for broader conclusions or

generalisations to be drawn. However, an interpretivist philosophical approach was invaluable in this research in order to allow for the complexity of the student perceptions and staff views to be fully explored, the main aim of my research.

The choice of focus groups was an appropriate way of collecting qualitative data from a small number of people in interactive group discussions to ascertain views and perceptions of students. However, as discussed in chapter 4, there may be limitations to their use. For instance, not everyone may speak, or participants may not give their real views and my presence could have inhibited discussion or caused biases. However, by building confidence with the students and stressing confidentiality and anonymity the challenges outlined above were overcome as much as possible.

Individual staff interviews were chosen because they can give the researcher a rich insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening. Interviews are also dependent on the honesty of the participants and sometimes participants provide information they think the researcher wants to hear rather than what might be what they consider to be the real answer. These issues were lessened, however, as I tried to achieve a supportive, non-confrontational and confidential environment, particularly by the way I asked my questions.

A limitation may also be levelled at my own positionality in this research and this is discussed in more detail in chapter 4. I am a senior academic at the sending institution and an 'insider' and so this could have caused difficulties in dealing with students and staff in view of my work position. However, I ensured that I was aware how I might shape the story being investigated. I, therefore, adopted a reflexive and transparent approach, and in particular, kept a research journal so I could explain and reflect on what choices I had made as they developed.

The research, although limited in scale, is an important addition to the growing, collected knowledge on TNE and the student journey. This research study does not seek to generalise the findings (i.e. the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other situations), and caution is needed when focus groups and interviews are the research instruments (Gray, 2014; Kitzinger, 1995). However, it

is possible to claim a broader relevance for this research through important and unique insights from the participants which help illuminate and contribute to the greater understanding of students' perceptions and experiences along their TNE journey. As Whittemore et al. (2001, 534) argued:

> "Every study has biases and particular threats to validity, all methods have limitations, and research involves multiple interpretations as well as a moral and ethical component inherent in judgements".

7.3 Recommendations for future research

It is likely that TNE will continue to grow and develop in different ways across the world. A better understanding of the students' experiences and the students' TNE journey, therefore, are essential to ensure that TNE can develop and flourish for all stakeholders. The complex relationship between culture and educational practice (Egege and Kutieleh, 2008) is why it is important to understand the role of culture in TNE and why further research on this subject is important.

7.3.1 The student perspective

Similar studies to this research would be helpful in understanding the student journey in different countries on different programmes. Young, undergraduate students were the focus of this research, but it may be helpful to also carry out further research on the student experiences and perceptions of older, more mature students who are working full-time, often with families to support, on undergraduate or postgraduate TNE programmes.

Further research on the experiences of international students studying on TNE programmes would be helpful, to confirm (or otherwise) the research of Mellors-Bourne (2017) who found that overseas students studying on a TNE programme probably gain the most benefits, including, intercultural understanding through their international experience, and why this may be the case and what lessons can be learned.

It would be helpful if there was further research on how students are prepared for TNE. If students come from non-western backgrounds, they may have difficulty

adequately preparing for and adjusting to a Western style of education, and, in turn, adapting learned skills and understandings to their home context.

The accumulation of capital was found to be an important aspect of TNE and how students aspire to better their lives. Follow up research, once students have graduated, into their later lives some years post study would, therefore, be beneficial to see how successful and valuable their TNE study and experiences have been, especially in the accumulation of capital.

It would be helpful for further research on the experiences of TNE students who choose to study abroad for part of their programme (e.g. Semester abroad; Final year). Comparisons of their experiences in both countries and what can be learned from these experiences would be useful for both host and sending institutions.

Finally, it is not known how many students actually work abroad once they graduate and what experience they accumulate. This was a key feature of this research study, with many students suggesting that they wanted to work for a period abroad, but then come back to Malaysia. It would, therefore, be helpful if this could be part of further research.

7.3.2 Other stakeholders

Mizzi (2015) discussed different stakeholders in TNE. There has been limited research on asking the views of parents and families of TNE students. As part of this research study information was not collected on family background, such as educational attainments of the family, being first generation students into HE or not. Employers that have employed TNE graduates were also not part of this research study and so it may be useful to ascertain what value employers, in different countries, place on TNE graduates and their understanding of TNE. It would, therefore, be helpful in understanding the views and perceptions of all stakeholders, to broaden the knowledge in order to achieve successful TNE partnerships, high-quality student experiences and graduates that employers need to fill local skills gaps.

The voices of host institution teachers also need to be heard (Carauna and Montgomery, 2015) along with those of link tutors from the sending institutions and so further research would be helpful.

7.3.3 The sending institutions

There is little research on the perceptions about TNE students at the sending institution from sending institution staff and students. There is often a lack of knowledge about TNE in sending institutions (Knight and McNamara, 2015) and it would, therefore, be helpful to find out what students on the home programme think about their TNE student colleagues and how the two institutions and all the appropriate actors could work better together.

7.3.4 Which TNE model?

There has been little research on which model of TNE (e.g. Franchises, International branch campuses, external validation, etc) may be better for a high-quality student experience (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005). This may be a valuable avenue for further research.

7.4 The contribution to new knowledge and the significance of this research

This research has made a significant and original contribution, at doctoral level, to understanding and improving professional practice and knowledge, by a better awareness of the TNE student journey and the students' experiences and perceptions on that journey. Gaps in the research literature relating to the student voice have been identified by a number of researchers (e.g. Caruana and Montgomery, 2015; Waterval et al., 2015; Wilkins and Balakrishnan, 2013; Miliszewska and Sztendur, 2012; Hoare, 2006; Chapman and Pyvis, 2005) and are discussed in chapter 1. This research study has, therefore, made an important contribution to help fill these gaps and give students (and staff) a voice, building on existing literature. This contribution can be summarised as the importance of:

- Culture on the TNE student journey in Malaysia as well as the significant role the family makes in student decision making;

- Obtaining a Western degree and a global and international education to enhance student life chances, gain a good job and so the accumulation of capital;
- The Western degree being the same as that taught in the UK (with just minor modifications if necessary);
- The proximity of the student home to the host institution campus;
- Opportunities for students to work abroad after graduation to gain experience but to return home to Malaysia;
- Knowing and understanding the benefits and challenges students place on their TNE education e.g. value for money, small classes, well known by lecturers, student friendly college, employer focussed programme, opportunities to study and work abroad;
- Better and more contact with the UK institution including some teaching by the sending institution (planned and organised), better understanding of the UK institution's regulations and procedures, support for part-time lecturers to ensure they are at the same standard as full-time lecturers;
- Both institutions working together and learning from each other for the benefit of the students in Malaysia and also the UK.

The findings from this research will be helpful to both policy makers, practitioners and professionals involved in TNE at any scale – local, national or international. It will help improve the TNE students' quality of experience and learning in Malaysia as well as other countries, as a home or sending institution student.

7.5 Recommendations from the findings of this research

This research aimed to explore, in-depth, perceptions and experiences of host students on their TNE journey whilst undertaking UK franchise programmes in Malaysia. The methodology employed was that of qualitative research using thematic analysis drawing on host student focus groups, and host and sending institutions individual staff interviews. The following sixteen recommendations have emerged from the findings of this research study and from the research questions. The recommendations relate to feedback and student engagement, staff development, and managers and policy makers (host and sending institutions). The

aim of these recommendations is to better understand and continually seek the views of students on their TNE journey in order to ensure they receive a high-quality student experience. The recommendations are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Recommendations from the research

Feedback and student engagement	1. Formal feedback from TNE students studying at the host institution on a franchised programme should be sought on a regular basis (see Debowski, 2008). 2. This student feedback should also include feedback from students who are undertaking semester abroad programmes or undertaking the final year of the franchised programme at the sending institution in order to understand their experiences and needs away from their home country. 3. Review student engagement procedures at the host institution to ensure a more active approach by students (See Maxwell-Stuart and Huisman, 2018). Full confidentiality is essential and should be a priority for all student feedback mechanisms in order to properly engage with students and give them confidence in the process (see Maxwell-Stuart and Huisman, 2018).
Staff development	1 A taught module (face to face or online) on culture and cultural sensitivities should be available and undertaken by staff who engage with overseas partners and TNE students, including external examiners, internal moderators, link tutors and administrative staff. 2 Better explanation of the quality assurance systems, including moderation processes, to students (and staff) and why they are required and of benefit to all stakeholders. A simple guide could be produced for students to include the value of the sending institution degree because the degree has been properly quality assured.
Managers and policy makers (Host and sending institutions)	1. Set up regular joint learning and teaching sessions (time zones permitting) to learn from each institutions' best practice. 2. Consider how best to disseminate relevant TNE research literature within the host and sending institutions, at all management levels so it can be acted on as appropriate. 3. In order to aid the accumulation social capital by students and because of the spatial separation of students from the sending institution, the following should be encouraged:

	- Active alumni associations should set up and supported by both the host and sending institution; - external examiners should endeavour to meet with TNE students at the host institution when they visit (or sending institution if TNE students are studying there) (See Waters and Leung, 2013); and - more organised and formal contact by sending institution staff with host students when they visit should be encouraged, including the possibility of timetabled and organised teaching. 4. Collaborative research initiatives between the host and sending institutions should be supported and developed (see O'Mahony, 2014). 5. Communities of practice to be supported and fostered between staff (and students) in the host and sending institution to develop an element of reciprocity, interaction and collaborative working to help aid the better understanding of views to improve the student experience. (see Tsiligiris, 2015b; Keay et al., 2014; Mahmud et al., 2010). 6. Strategies to be identified to help strengthen student (and staff) identification with the sending institution and develop group membership e.g. social networking, more contact with the sending institution, communities of practice (see Debowski, 2008; Wilkins et al., 2017). 7. Institutions to consider when setting up TNE partnerships whether a franchise is the right model as identical programmes and curriculum may not always be appropriate (see Keay et al., 2014). 8. Ensure the promotion and advertising of the sending institutions brand is fully utilised for recruitment purposes of the TNE students. 9. The recruitment, development and support of part-time lecturers at the host institution are continually monitored by both institutions to ensure that the students receive a high-quality experience. 10. Formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms should be developed to ensure where there are differences within the partnership, a process to ensure a mutually satisfactory conclusion can be achieved. 11. Better recognition of the good work and value of the host institution staff. This may include staff awards at a ceremony attended by staff from the sending institution.

7.6 Conclusion and final remarks – the importance of the student voice

Malik (2012, 1) argued that, "TNE is the face of international expansion" whilst (Jöns, 2007, 97) stated that, "Transnational movements of academics shape the production and dissemination of knowledge and thus the geographies of contemporary knowledge economies". The expansion and growth of TNE across the world, but particularly in Asia, will continue as new markets emerge and other forms of TNE develop to satisfy a continually growing demand (UK HE International Unit, 2013). As Wilkins and Juusola (2018, 76) argued:

> "Over the next decade, it is likely that TNE will strengthen its status as a central feature of higher education in many parts of the world, and this mode of operation will evolve in terms of both supply and demand".

Knight and McNamara (2017, 41) stated that:

> "Growing demands from students to study an international curriculum without having to travel abroad will result in new institutional actors emerging, new delivery models evolving and TNE will remain at the forefront of innovation in the global HE sector".

Ziguras (2008) (2008, 53) also argued that, "the major lasting legacy of TNE will be the capacity building role they have provided…".

In my research it has been important to give a voice to the students, often ignored in the research literature up until recently, by being willing to listen to their views with an open mind (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Understanding and taking account of my positionality in this research has been important in this respect and so the views of students (and staff) have been heard.

The research has painted a vivid account of the student voice and their lived experiences and has particularly highlighted the importance of the role of culture in the student TNE journey in Malaysia and how it can also affect the staff at both the host and sending institutions as well as the students. The role of the family has been found to be at the centre of the students' life and their decision making. The colonial past is important to the students and their families, at least for now, and can affect how the partnership operates. Misunderstandings and tensions may surface between the host and sending institutions due to how staff act and their lack of cultural understanding. Affordability and value for money were important factors in the

choice of HEI, as was attending a Western or UK university but there seemed to be evidence that many students and their families were less interested in which Western university. This outcome from my research resonates with the findings of Egege and Kutieleh (2008) who also found that TNE students want a Western education because it will be transformative and, they believe, give them an international perspective. They found that TNE students do not want their Western education to be less Western, and this is a key finding from my research.

My research also found that employability, the importance of a global education and the opportunity to work overseas, once graduated, were important for students but for them to return eventually to Malaysia was also important. Students were happy with the teaching and their full-time lecturers but there were challenges with part-time lecturers.

It has been argued in this research that if the TNE student voice is heard, and so better understood, it could help contribute to both the improvement of the student experience on TNE programmes as well as improvements to the UK franchise programmes. By providing a rich picture of the TNE student's perspective of their experiences and capturing the students' feelings and information about their perceptions will improve their HE journey. This has been difficult in the past as the research literature, until relatively recently, has mostly neglected the views, perceptions and expectations of one of the key stakeholders of TNE, although this is now slowly changing (Andrews and Tynan, 2010).

This research has advanced and contributed to the in-depth understanding of the TNE student voice. The variety of findings, recommendations and conclusions from this research will provide useful advice for TNE policy makers and managers in both host and sending institutions to better support a high-quality experience for students on franchised and other TNE programmes. Without this in-depth appreciation and acknowledgement of the distinct TNE student community, different in many ways from the home institution community of students, it may prove difficult for sending universities to be, and remain, competitive in this ever increasing and demanding global world (Malik, 2012).

The findings and conclusions of this research, by making an original contribution to professional knowledge, have provided useful advice, suggestions and recommendations for TNE host and sending institutions of franchise programmes (and for other types of TNE) in helping to achieve and maintain a high-quality student experience for both TNE and sending institution students. As Hill et al. (2014, 963) asserted, "…while the benefits of TNE are real, the mechanics for its successful implementation, measured by benefits to all stakeholders, are extremely complex and may result in unintended consequences". But it also needs to be remembered that TNE is not a homogeneous activity. As Sin et al. (2019, 145) pointed out:

> "Transnational education is essentially a diverse landscape with different institutions and programmes, which, interacting with the complexities of host contexts bring varying gradients of worth and possibility to the individual and society".

Listening to and acting on the TNE student voice, and particularly understanding the cultural issues involved in TNE are, therefore, essential in ensuring in achieving a high-quality student experience. Bovill et al. (2015, 22) also suggested, "that keeping a critical and questioning stance towards the work we do in other people's countries is absolutely essential as the basis for all ethical transnational partnerships". As Hoare (2010, 47) noted, from a response from one of the lecturers in her research, "…you're going to have to be humble enough to let the students show you….". TNE students, through this and other more recent research studies, are now, at last, having their voices heard and taken into account, as they are the experts and ultimate insiders.

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Appendix 1 Ethics approval from the University of Lincoln (Confidential information omitted)

Ethical Approval Form: Human Research Projects

Please word-process this form. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

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This form must be completed for each piece of research activity conducted by academics, graduate students and undergraduates. The completed form must be approved by the School of Education Research Ethics Committee.

e all sections. If a section is not applicable, write N/A.

Name of researcher	Keith Pinn **Department/School:** Education
Position in the University	EdD Candidate
Role in relation to this research	Primary Investigator
Title of the research project	Transnational Higher Education students finding their voices (A resubmission for approval – originally approved 15th December 2015)
Brief statement of your main research question	An exploration of the perceptions of host students on franchise programmes in Malaysia on their Transnational Higher Education (TNE) journey: Empowering students to find their voice in a cross-cultural context. What are the benefits, challenges and motivations as perceived by students on their TNE journey in undertaking UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia. In particular, what do they value most and are their expectations being met especially in the accumulation of the social and cultural capital of a 'Western' degree? What can be learnt by both the host and sending institutions from the student voice in delivering a high-quality student experience both in Malaysia and the UK?
Brief description of the project	Students are the experts and ultimate insiders. I will therefore be exploring in detail the perceptions of students whilst studying undergraduate business degrees at a private college in Malaysia which are franchised by a higher education institution in the UK. The research aims to explore specifically students' perceptions of their TNE journey, what value they place on it and how they are prepared for and supported during their experience whilst at college on the franchised programmes. This exploration will help gain unique insights into the perceptions of students in the host institution which will

add in a small but significant way to how programmes are delivered in Malaysia helping to improve practice and the student experience at the private college in Malaysia but lessons may also be learnt for the home programmes in the UK.

It is important to note that from exploring the literature on transnational education this is a under researched area and so worthy of future study.

The private college in Malaysia is called ……and consists of four colleges and a university spread over five campuses across Malaysia with about 2700 …….students. The University of …….have had a long partnership arrangement over more than 20 years with growing numbers of students across growing numbers of franchise and dual award programmes.

TNE is the provision of education for students based in a country other than the one in which the awarding institution is located and has a wide variety of delivery modes (eg franchises, international branch campuses, etc).

A pilot project has already been carried out before the main research study phase (Ethics approval dated 15th December 2015). As a result of the pilot project there has been a refocusing of the research aim and questions and hence this further ethics approval application.

A qualitative research design has been selected for the main research phase to allow for the complexity of the student (and staff) perceptions and experiences to be explored and captured.

The study will explore in detail the perceptions of students studying undergraduate business degrees at ….. It will explore specifically students' views about and experiences of their TNE journey and how they are prepared for and supported during their experience. The benefits and challenges faced in the reality of practice from the point of induction in their first year of study to their final year of study at …….(or at……) will be examined in detail.

Three purposeful samples of approximately 5-6 students each covering years 1, 2 and 3 of undergraduate franchised programmes at the private college in Malaysia.

One purposeful sample of approximately 5-6 students from the private college in Malaysia who have chosen to study their final year in the UK and who will be based in the UK.

All students will initially be approached via a timetabled class room session and if expressions of interest to participate are made students will either be seen on an individual basis by the primary investigator to discuss the project and obtain consent or where this is not practicable students wanting to participate will have the opportunity to discuss the project via telephone, Skype or e-mail. Participation will be completely voluntary and

any information provided will be confidential to the primary investigator.

Private rooms (pre-booked) on the ……Campus at ….. in ….. or at the ……..Campus in Malaysia where the students will be studying will be used to conduct the focus groups in order to avoid interruptions and extraneous noise and thereby promote rapport between the primary investigator and the students. Refreshments will be made available to the groups.

As the study will be dependent upon the accuracy of source data, semi-structured voice recorded interviews will be conducted. All tape recordings and transcripts will be accessible to only the primary investigator. All collected data will be stored in a safe locked place or on a password protected computer accessible only to the primary investigator. It is estimated that the focus groups will last approximately 1-2 hours. The interview agenda will be discussed with each group at the outset of the interview. However, it will be indicated that there is no requirement to cover all issues or to cover the issues in any particular order. Students will be invited to raise issues they feel relevant. The use of a tape recorder will allow full attention to be paid to the interviewees. Written notes will be recorded by a co-researcher (Dr ……., a colleague of the primary investigator) during the focus groups to capture any nonverbal interaction taking place – such interactions can then be linked to verbal accounts. Notes will also ensure that quotations and the origin of ideas and voices of individual students can be recognised and tracked more readily during the analytic process. Use of a co-researcher will also enable the primary investigator to concentrate on discussion and facilitation of the group discussions. It is envisaged that transcription will be undertaken by the primary investigator within 48-72 hours.

Group interaction will drive the conversation and hopefully uncover opinions, the reasoning behind them and the underlying factors that have shaped these experiences with minimal prompting from the primary investigator. However, as part of the semi-structured interview process the primary investigator will have a note of key areas to cover such as why students have chosen to study at ….., what have been their experiences whilst studying there, and what improvements would they suggest and their recommendations.

Follow up individual interviews with 1-2 students from each focus group (in Malaysia and the UK) may also be required to help clarify or expand on issues raised in the focus groups. Students will be asked before each focus group if they would be willing to take part in individual follow up interviews and their permission requested in writing. Their participation in the individual interviews will be completely voluntary and they may decline to be involved later on or leave the interview at any time.

Permission has been given to contact the students and then to carry out the focus groups and individual interviews at either the University of ……premises by the Dean of the …… Business School and the Director, Product and Partnership at ….. (the senior member of …… staff responsible for such matters) for students at ….. in Malaysia.

As the study will be dependent upon the accuracy of source data, semi-structured tape-recorded individual interviews will be conducted. All tape recordings and transcripts will be accessible to only the primary investigator. All collected data will be stored in a safe locked place accessible only to the primary investigator. It is estimated that each individual interview will last approximately 1-2 hours. The interview agenda will be discussed with the student at the outset of the interview. However, it will be indicated that there is no requirement to cover all issues or to cover the issues in any particular order. Students will be invited to raise issues they feel relevant. The use of a tape recorder will allow full attention to be paid to the interviewees. Written notes will be recorded by myself during the interviews. It is envisaged that the transcription will be undertaken by the principal investigator within 48-72 hours.

As part of the semi-structured interview process the primary investigator will have a note of key areas to cover such as any cross-cultural challenges and conflicts and any improvements or modifications they would suggest for a better student experience.

In addition to the student focus groups outlined above it is envisaged that between 4-6 individual interviews from a range of levels of … staff will be carried out which may include a Dean of School, a Head of Programme and lecturing staff on … franchised modules. It is anticipated that the interviews will be held at …. College in Malaysia (…… campus) but depending on circumstances these individual interviews may have to be held by video conference or Skype (with the primary investigator based in the UK at ….. In addition, it is envisaged that individual interviews with two ….. link tutors will be held. If held at …. or …. arrangements will be made to conduct the interviews in a private room in order to avoid interruptions and extraneous noise and thereby promote rapport between the primary investigator and the staff member. If by video conference or Skype the rooms will be secure and quiet with no one else present

All staff will be initially be approached individually by e-mail and if expressions of interest to participate are made staff will either be contacted by telephone or Skype on an individual basis by the primary investigator to discuss the main study and obtain consent. Participation will be completely voluntary and any information provided will be confidential to the primary investigator.

As the study will be dependent upon the accuracy of source data, semi-structured tape-recorded interviews will be conducted. All tape recordings and transcripts will be accessible to only the primary investigator. All collected data will be stored in a safe locked place accessible only to the principal investigator. It is estimated that each individual interview will last approximately 1-2 hours. The interview agenda will be discussed with the member of staff at the outset of the interview. However, it will be indicated that there is no requirement to cover all issues or to cover the issues in any particular order. Staff will be invited to raise issues they feel relevant. The use of a tape recorder will allow full attention to be paid to the interviewees. Written notes

	may be recorded by myself during the interviews. It is envisaged that the transcription will be undertaken by the principal investigator within 48-72 hours. As part of the semi-structured interview process the primary investigator will have a note of key areas to cover such any cross-cultural challenges and conflicts, what makes a successful partnership and any improvements or modifications they would suggest for a better student experience. Permission has been given to contact the staff and then to carry out the individual interviews at either the …….. by the Dean of the ……. Business School and the Director, Product and Partnership at …. (the senior member of ….. staff responsible for such matters) for students at …… in Malaysia.
	Approximate start date: Sept 2016 — **Anticipated end date:** December 2017
Name and contact details of the Principal Investigator (if not you) or supervisor (if a student)	Dr Julian Beckton jbeckton@lincoln.ac.uk 01522 886748
Names of other researchers or student investigators involved	……, Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance, University of …….. (A co-researcher for the focus groups only)

Location(s) at which this project is to be carried out	1)….. Campus, University of ……., ……, ……., …….. One focus group of …..students studying their final year at ….. and follow up individual interviews with 1-2 students from the focus group. Two individual interviews with …… link tutors. 2)…… College, Malaysia (……. campus in Kuala Lumpur) (or by video conference or Skype) Three focus groups of ….. students from years 1, 2 and 3 and follow up individual interviews with 1-2 students from each of the focus groups. 4-8 individual staff from ….. which may include a Dean of School, a Head of Programme and lecturing staff on …..modules.

Statement of the ethical issues involved and how they are to be addressed, including discussion of the potential risks of harm to both project participants and researchers **This should include:** **an assessment of the vulnerability of the participants and researchers** **the manner and extent to which the research might not honour principles of respect, beneficence and justice** **concerns relating to the relationships of power between the researcher(s) and those participating in or affected by the research**	Before each student focus group is conducted the study will be discussed with students at a prearranged meeting (or via Skype or telephone) so that they are fully briefed and aware of the purpose of the study and their involvement in it. An information sheet along with a consent form will be sent to students setting out the aims of the study and their possible involvement in it. No attempt will be made to conceal the nature and purpose of the research. Once verbal agreement has been obtained from students the focus groups will be scheduled. All questions raised by students will be answered before agreement to participate is obtained in writing. Students will have time to reflect and think about participating so as not to feel pressurised in any way and participation will be completely voluntary and any information provided will be confidential to the principal investigator. Before each staff interview the study will be discussed with staff at a prearranged meeting (or via Skype or telephone) so that they are fully briefed and aware of the purpose of the study and their involvement in it. An information sheet along with a consent form will be sent to staff setting out the aims of the study and their possible involvement in it. No attempt will be made to conceal the nature and purpose of the research. Once verbal agreement has been obtained from staff the individual interviews will be scheduled. All questions raised by staff will be answered before agreement to participate is obtained in writing. Staff will have time to reflect and think about participating so as not to feel pressurised in any way and participation will be completely voluntary and any information provided will be confidential to the principal investigator. The rich mix of cultures and nationalities of the staff and students (and some staff and students may not be from Malaysia but from other countries) and any resulting cultural sensitivities will be taken into account in this study. There may also be issues with gender and ethnicity, particularly in the Malaysian setting that will need to be taken into account. The long experience of the primary investigator in dealing with such issues and in working abroad in Malaysia over a number of years will be used to ensure that all sensitivities are understood and taken account of. For instance, the focus groups and individual interviews will be led sensitively and the lines of enquiry may be adjusted if such issues arise. It is anticipated that the study will cause little if any physical or psychological distress however it is acknowledged that on asking students about their experiences in INTI questioning may ignite emotions and possibly distress about being away from home or in a context that may create a degree of anxiety. In the light of this if any one participant becomes distressed the interview will be adjourned or the participant may leave without penalty. In the event that a student is distressed they will be advised to consult with their programme tutor at …. in the first instance. Students will also be advised they can have access to the counselling facilities at …. if required. The researchers will not engage in the provision of counselling of the students. If any stress is caused to the staff they will be referred to the counselling service at ….. Again the researchers will not engage in the provision of counselling. One of the key issues for the primary investigator to be aware of is the power relationship with …. staff and students. They may be reluctant to share information for

	fear of being judged. Staff and students may experience some discomfort if they know that the primary investigator is an Associate Director at …. and has close relations with ….. The primary investigator will therefore stress that his role in this context is that of an EdD student at the University of Lincoln as opposed to an academic member of staff at ….. and that the process will give complete anonymity and confidentiality to the participants. Assurances concerning anonymity and confidentiality will be given to all staff and students before and after the individual staff interviews and student focus groups. Unless personal data emerges as a theme or category that has conceptual promise during the analysis phase no personal data will be collected. However, brief staff and student demographic data such as gender, programme, level of study will be gathered (see attached sheets). Where it is deemed appropriate to collect personal data full confidentiality will be maintained. Immense care will be taken to protect the anonymity of all students and staff. Code numbers will be assigned to the interview tape and transcript and the list of codes and names stored in a locked cupboard along with information on a password protected computer will be made only available to the primary investigator. Quotations from staff and students and descriptions may be included in the pilot project report/dissertation however these will be anonymised to ensure complete anonymity. It should be noted that although it is anticipated that no physical or mental distress will be caused by this research the reality is that some staff and students may air sensitive or emotive issues and that dissonant views and perspectives may emerge. Strength of feeling or opinion also has the potential to cause a degree of distress within the individual or group. Whilst such interactional processes will contribute to the richness of the data it is acknowledged that distress may result. It is envisaged that the skills, experience and attributes of the primary investigator will enable him to facilitate such discussion skilfully without becoming too involved so as to suppress discussion. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity all demographic data, voice recorded files and associated transcripts will be coded and stored in a safe locked cabinet along with information on a password protected computer accessible to only the primary investigator. All data gathered for the purpose of this research will be destroyed upon completion of the qualification and its associated publication. Confidentiality will be protected at all times. Staff and students will be advised of this in the information sheet and informed consent sheet. This will also be reinforced prior to the commencement of the interviews and focus groups.
Does this research involve children and/or young people?	☐ **No** ☐**X** **All students will be over 18 years of age**
	If yes, please explain (a) how you have obtained or will obtain the appropriate permissions to work with these people (E.g., DBS check in the UK), and (b) your principles for their ethical engagement.

Ethical approval from other bodies

Does this research require approval from an external body?	☐ **No** ☐X
	If yes, please state which body:
Has ethical approval already been obtained from that body? Please note that such approvals must be obtained before the project begins.	☐ **(Please append documentary evidence to this form.)** ☐ **(If no, please explain why below.)**

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

I hereby request that the School of Education Research Ethics Committee review this application for the research as described above, and reply with a decision about its approval on ethical grounds.

I certify that I have read the University's Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Humans and Other Animals (which can be found online here: http://visit.lincoln.ac.uk/C11/C8/ResearchEthicsPolicy/Document%20Library/Research%20Ethics%20Policy.pdf).

Applicant signature: **Date: 3rd August 2016**

Keith Pinn

Print name:

FOR STUDENT APPLICATIONS ONLY
Academic Support for Ethics

Academic support must be sought from your mentor prior to submitting this form to the School of Education Research Ethics Committee.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught applicants should obtain approval from their tutor or an academic member of staff nominated by the Department.

Postgraduate Research applicants should obtain approval from their Director of Studies.

I (the undersigned) support this application for ethical approval.

_____

Academic / Director of Studies signature **Date**

Dr Julian Beckton

_____

Print name

For completion by the Chair of the School of Education Research Ethics Committee

Please select ONE of A, B, C or D below.

X☐ A. The School of Education Research Committee gives ethical approval to this research.

☐ B. The School of Education Research Committee gives *conditional* ethical approval to this research.

Please state the condition (including the date by which the condition must be satisfied, if applicable).	

☐ C. The School of Education Research Committee cannot give ethical approval to this research but refers the application to the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for higher level consideration.

Please state the reason.	

☐ D. The School of Education Research Committee cannot give ethical approval to this research and recommends that the research should *not* proceed.

Please state the reason.	

Signature of Chair of School of Education Research Committee (or nominee)

Signed **Date**

Appendix 2 Topic guide for each focus group (Anonymised)

Title of Study
Transnational Higher Education (TNE) Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

Student Focus Group Aide Memoire

Introduction

- Thanks for giving up your time
- Introductions (and name cards); briefly explain the study and its objectives;
- Confirm their consent (complete form if not done already) and will be recorded (and reasons for this), reassure about confidentiality and anonymity. May leave at any time. Complete student demographic data sheet;
- Will last between 1-2 hours. Make explicit our roles in this context – that of primary investigator and co-researcher. Ask to consider interviewer as "empty vessel." But have some broad areas to cover if possible. Ground rules/Conventions of focus group participation – mutual respect – only one person speaking at a time, the session is open, and everyone's view is important, confidentiality of what is said in the focus group; Not testing you in any way; No right or wrong answers.
- Any questions so far?

The research questions

1. What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?
2. Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?
3. What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience

Topic areas to be covered (but depends on student conversation and so directed by their participation)

- **Why did you choose the host institution and the programme? Why not Study abroad?**
  - Was it important for you to study on a programme approved by the sending institution or another Western university? *(Views on the value of a UK/Western degree/franchised programme – accumulation of social and cultural capital)*
  - Why not ……(Australian university?) (is more exam focussed?)
  - What were/are your motivations for studying at the host institution and a sending institution degree? Reputation? Standards?
  - How did you find out by the host institution and the sending institution?
  - Have you considered an exchange at the sending institution?
  - How important do you think an international education is? For employment

(positional)? For an international outlook *(transformative*)? (*see Chapman and Pyvis, 2005)*

- Have you heard terms such as TNE, Cross Border, Offshore, Borderless, etc to describe the type of programme you are on?

- **Experiences whist studying at the host institution** - *Please give examples*

- What are the best things about studying on your programme at the host institution?
- What do you value most?
- What challenges have you had to face? *(e.g. Culture shock)*
- Any improvements?
- What support have you been given whilst a student on the franchised programme – from the host institution? From the sending institution? At Induction; Critical thinking skills; academic language skills; voicing opinions *(Specify for levels 4, 5 and 6)*?
- What opportunities have been given to you for an intercultural experience Whilst studying at the host institution? Was an intercultural experience important for you? (*TNE students rank developing intercultural competence highly [UK International Unit, 2016]).*
- Curriculum, teaching and learning styles too Western centric?
- Teaching staff are from the host institution. Would it have been beneficial to have some/all teaching staff from the sending institution?
- Would it be beneficial to have some form of contact with students at the sending institution?
- What do you think you need to do to be a successful student on the programme at the host institution? What qualities?

- **A sense of belonging – Student identity** - *Please give examples*

- Do you feel like a host institution student? Sending institution student?
- How much do you know about the sending institution?
- Do you feel like a sending institution student?
- Is this important to you? Any ideas how to improve?
- Did sending institution staff get involved with your programme e.g. Link Tutor; Director of Programmes?
- Do you know how the sending institution get involved in your programme?
- Do you know how you can have a voice to influence change?
- Do your experiences at the host institution on a sending institution programme meet your expectations?
- What do you value most from being a sending institution student at the host institution?
- Do you anticipate staying in your home country once you graduate (*Brain drain issues*)

- **Any emerging issues from previous focus groups?**

It has become apparent that:

- Limited links with the sending institution
- Importance of the badge of a Western degree
- Word of mouth/family and friends
- Importance of other skills, not just academic – international outlook and exposure important

- **Any final thoughts or questions?**

Thank-you

Conclusion and end of focus group - Reminder of what will happen to the data, confidentiality and anonymity; thanks for their contributions; might need to follow up with them at a later stage for clarification; Can I take your e-mail addresses; Happy to send you a copy of the final report. If you decide not to take part in this research, you have up to one month after this focus group to formally inform me.

Appendix 3 Student participant information sheet (Anonymised)

Participant information sheet – Student focus groups

Title of study
Transnational Higher Education (TNE) Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

Introduction
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the research that is being done and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask me about anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this study?

The overall aim of this study is to explore the experiences of staff and students teaching/studying on University of (sending institution) franchised programmes at host institution in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and challenges of studying on a transnational education programme. Such understanding will help both the host institution and the University of (sending institution) to consider ways of better managing the partnership and so enable both institutions to enhance the student experience.

Do I have to take part?
It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect any treatment/care that you may receive (should this be relevant).

How long will my part in the study take?
If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in a student focus group of approximately 1 – 2 hours. We may also need to briefly contact you again after the focus groups for any possible follow-up questions.

What will happen to me if I take part?
Students will be interviewed in focus groups of between approximately 5-7 students. A private room (pre-booked) will be used at the host institution at …..campus.

The interview agenda for students will be discussed with the group at the outset of the focus group. However, there will be no requirement to cover all issues or to cover the issues in any particular order. Students will be invited to raise issues they

feel relevant. The use of a voice recorder will allow full attention to be paid to the interviewees. Written notes will be recorded by a co-researcher for the focus groups. It is envisaged that transcription of the recoding will be undertaken by the primary investigator within 48-72 hours. All transcripts will be stored securely on a pass word protected computer accessible only to the primary investigator.

Permission has been given to contact students and then to carry out the focus groups at either the University of (*sending institution*) premises in the UK by the Dean of the Business School or at the host institution in Malaysia by the Director, Product and Partnership at the host institution (the senior member of host institution staff responsible for such matters).

What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?
It is anticipated that the study will cause little if any physical or psychological distress however it is acknowledged that on asking students about their experiences at the host institution questioning may ignite emotions and possibly distress about being away from home or in a context that may create a degree of anxiety. In the light of this if any one participant becomes distressed the interview may on the request of the participant be adjourned or the participant may leave without penalty. In the event that a student is distressed they will be advised to consult with their Head of Programme at the host institution. The primary investigator will not engage in the counselling of the students.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There may be no direct benefits of taking part in this study but changes to practice and infrastructures may be made following the completion of the study which it is hoped will have a positive impact on the student learning experience.

How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Confidentiality will be protected at all times. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity all demographic data, voice recorded files and associated transcripts will be coded and stored in a safe locked cabinet or a password protected computer both accessible to only the primary investigator.

What will happen to the data collected within this study?
All data gathered for the purpose of this research will be destroyed upon completion of the study and its associated publication. Confidentiality will be protected at all times. Code numbers will be assigned to the interview tape and transcript and the list of codes and names stored in a locked cupboard or a password protected computer made only available to the principal investigator. Quotations from students and descriptions may be included in the thesis, however, these will be anonymised to ensure complete anonymity.

Information may be published but your name will not be associated with the research in any way.

Who has reviewed this study?
This research study has been reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Research Committee of the University of Lincoln and ethical approval was granted on 7th September 2016.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?
If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, the Principal Investigator, in writing, by phone or by email:

Keith Pinn
……Building
University of (*sending institution*)
…….Lane
…….
UK

Tel: +44 (0) …….
E-mail: ……

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to take part in this study.

Appendix 4 Student and staff consent form

Consent form for a research study as part of a doctorate in education at the University of Lincoln

Title of study

Transnational Higher Education (TNE) Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

I, the undersigned *[please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS]*

……

hereby freely agree to take part in the above study.

1 I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

2 I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3 In giving my consent to participate in this study, I understand that voice recording will take place.

4 I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.

5 I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of
participant……Date…….

Signature of primary
investigator……..Date…….

Name of primary investigator: KEITH PINN

Appendix 5 Staff participant information sheet (Anonymised)

Participant information sheet – Staff interviews

Title of study
Transnational Higher Education (TNE) Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

Introduction
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the research that is being carried out and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask me about anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this study?
The overall aim of this study is to explore the experiences of students studying on University of (*sending institution*) franchised programmes at host institution in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and challenges of studying on a transnational education programme. Such understanding will help both host institution and the University of (*sending institution*) to consider ways of better managing the partnership and so enable both institutions to enhance the student experience.

Do I have to take part?
It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw up to one month after the interview has taken place. A decision to withdraw will not affect any treatment/care that you may receive (should this be relevant).

How long will my part in the study take?
If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in an individual academic staff interview of approximately 1 hour. You may also be briefly contacted again after the interview for any possible follow-up questions.

What will happen to me if I take part?
The interviews will be face to face with sending institution staff and by Skype with host institution staff. The interview agenda will be discussed with the member of staff at the outset of the interview. However, it will be indicated that there is no requirement to cover all issues or to cover the issues in any particular order. Staff will be invited to raise issues they feel relevant. The use of a digital recorder will allow full attention to be paid to the interviewees. Written notes may be recorded by the principal investigator during the interviews. It is envisaged that the transcription of the recording will be started by the principal investigator within 48-

72 hours of the completion of the interviews. As part of the semi-structured interview process the principal investigator will have a note of key areas to cover such any cross-cultural challenges and conflicts, what makes a successful partnership and any improvements or modifications they would suggest for a better student experience. All transcripts will be stored securely on a pass word protected computer accessible only to the primary investigator.

Permission has been given to contact the staff and then to carry out the individual interviews at either the University of (*sending institution*) premises by the Dean of the Business School and the Director, Product and Partnership at the host institution (the senior member of host institution staff responsible for such matters) for staff at the host institution staff in Malaysia.

What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?
It is anticipated that the study will cause little if any physical or psychological distress. In the light of this, if any one participant becomes distressed the interview may on the request of the participant be adjourned or the participant may leave without penalty. If any stress is caused to the staff, they will be referred to the counselling service at the host institution staff or the sending institution. The principal investigator will not engage in the provision of counselling.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There may be no direct benefits of taking part in this study but changes to practice and infrastructures may be made following the completion of the study which it is hoped will have a positive impact on the student learning experience.

How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Confidentiality will be protected at all times. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity all demographic data, voice recorded files and associated transcripts will be coded and stored in a safe locked cabinet or a password protected computer both accessible to only the principal investigator.

What will happen to the data collected within this study?
All data gathered for the purpose of this research will be destroyed upon completion of the study and its associated publication. Confidentiality will be protected at all times. Code numbers will be assigned to the interview tape and transcript and the list of codes and names stored in a locked cupboard or a password protected computer made only available to the principal investigator. Quotations from staff and descriptions may be included in the pilot project report/dissertation however these will be anonymised to ensure complete anonymity.

Information may be published but your name will not be associated with the research in any way.

Who has reviewed this study?
This research study has been reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Research Committee of the University of Lincoln and ethical approval was granted on 7th September 2016.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, the Principal Investigator, in writing, by phone or by email:

Keith Pinn
……Building
University of (*sending institution*)
…….Lane
…….
UK

Tel: +44 (0) …….
E-mail: ……

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to take part in this study.

Appendix 6 Topic guide for each staff interview

Host Institution Staff Interview Aide Memoire
Transnational Higher Education (TNE) Students Finding their Voice: The Experts and Ultimate Insiders

The research Questions

1. What are the experiences as perceived by students on their TNE journey studying on UK franchised programmes in the host country of Malaysia?
2. Do students value studying on a UK franchised programme in the host country of Malaysia, and if so why?
3. What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience

The Research Question for Staff
What can host and sending institutions learn from student experiences in order to deliver a high-quality student experience?

Emerging themes from the student focus groups

Choice of Institution
- Student research – Rankings, Image and Reputation (Are your college rankings important?)
- Western/UK degree important
- Get a Western certificate
- Real importance of family and friends; and school
- Value for money; Cheaper than competitors
- Employer focussed, less theoretical?
- Possible opportunity to study in UK

Programme Management
- Sending institution admin sometimes a problem eg moderation
- Not always clear from sending institution what they want – impact on students/often given vague answers
- Are there any cross-cultural conflicts or misunderstandings between sending institution and host institution; and if so how are they resolved?
- Do you or they face any conflicts between the UK and Malaysian HE systems?

Learning and Teaching
- Content important
- Different teaching styles
- Support from lecturers
- Small classes

- Not keen on global classroom
- Part-time lecturer issues? (Do they need a teaching qualification?) (Is there a support system?) (Are there interviews/with sending institution link tutors?)
- Transition issues from Diploma?
- Sending institution staff teaching/exchange lecturers?
- Access to sending institution VLE
- Want to work and study abroad
- Importance of other skills not just academic
- Lots of international students – positives/negatives

Student Identity

- Importance of identity and knowledge of sending institution. Is this important? If so why?
- Limited links with sending institution – possible benefits of some sending institution teaching
- Expectations more on host institution than sending institution
- Should students feel more sending institution?
- The value they and students put on a UK/Western/franchised degree – social and cultural capital of a Western degree (Taught at host institution or taught at sending institution)

International Education and Global Awareness

- International and global outlook and exposure important
- Cultural awareness
- How do we ensure students get a global experience/awareness?

What can the sending institution learn from host institution to give a better student experience to home students?

- How can we learn from our partner? Any benefits to sending institution staff?

Conclusions

- Any improvements or modifications that could be made for a better student experience? Any recommendations you would suggest?
- Any final thoughts or questions?

Thank-you

Reminder of what will happen to the data, confidentiality and anonymity; thanks for their contributions; might need to follow up with them at a later stage for clarification; Happy to send you a copy of the final report. If you decide not to take part in this research, you have up to one month after this interview to formally inform me.

Appendix 7 Examples of my reflections from my research journal
(Typed anonymised extracts from my research journal)

"Reflective writing can create informative, descriptive material from the mass of ideas, hopes, anxieties, fears, memories and images provided by everyday working life." (Bolton, 2005, 460)

"I have now started my journal and feel quite optimistic about it. I have tried hard to be honest and set out my own values and where I fit within this research study as an insider/outsider. I have been reading about how to keep a journal, about how to write reflexively and about bracketing out. I liked what Arber (2006, 147) said – having a dual identity as a practitioner and a researcher. I need to keep thinking about this and, more importantly, write down my thoughts to help with this research. I will try to do this regularly".
6th January 2016

"*Just carried out my first focus group as a moderator (the pilot). Only two students attended but they were really nice and very informative. I had a debriefing with my research assistant who took notes as well as keeping an eye on the recording equipment. Three important lessons for me: 1) the future focus groups should be in Malaysia, not the UK. This would stop the temptation for the students talking about their UK experiences; 2) I need to stop trying to solve their problems as though I am in my work mode. I am a researcher and must try to understand the difference; 3) Don't underestimate the challenge and planning of getting sufficient students to attend the focus group to make them worthwhile. Lots to think about and act on……"*
23rd March 2016

"I have tried to plan ahead much better than the pilot for the focus groups in Malaysia. (…..) has been really helpful at the college and I think I should have sufficient participants but I am still a little apprehensive. I hope enough students will attend tomorrow and that they will say what they really think. I'm a bit jet lagged so I hope I will also be on form".
11th October 2016

"Although I got up late and had to rush to meet the taxi, I needn't have worried. The students were lovely and very talkative. They were not phased at all by an academic from the UK talking to them and asking questions. I am looking forward to the other two focus groups on this trip."
12th October 2016

"I have been struggling with transcribing the student focus groups. I know I have lots of interesting and useful information, but I have underestimated how long it will take me. I have read about the time needed to transcribe but I must be slow as it is taking me many more hours than they say. I guess this is also to do with not always getting the Malaysian accent first time and the nature of transcribing focus groups. I did think about paying for this to be done professionally. A colleague of

mine has done this for his EdD and I was so jealous at first. However, the more I transcribe and the more I reflect on this, it is much more worthwhile doing it myself as I am hearing things I didn't notice at the time of the focus groups and so getting closer to the data. But it is hard!"
21st October 2016

"I have been thinking about whether to use NVivo or not. I will have a lot of data that I will need to organise and manage, and I know after reading about its use, it has many advantages (although there are some limitations as well). After going on a course on how to use NVivo I am a little overwhelmed. I think you need to use it straight away and devote quite a lot of time to practice. I have asked around colleagues at work who are researchers, and most think using NVivo can be a real advantage. I have also asked Sarah Amsler, a Reader at UoL, who is my interim supervisor before she leaves, what her views are. At my tutorial we discussed approaches to data analysis, in particular the use or not of technology like NVivo. She said her personal view is that I should learn to code and practice analysing codes manually in the first instance, to better grasp the logic underpinning this method and to keep the volume of data manageable. She thinks NVivo can be useful for thematising, cross referencing and visualising complex data, and for organising project libraries, data sets, etc., but it is also acceptable to organise and analyse my data by hand. I need to think about this some more but my feeling at the moment is that I will analyse my data manually".
10th June 2017

"Had much thought about how to carry out the host institution staff interviews in Malaysia. Unlike the student focus groups, I am not due to visit Malaysia for work for a number of months but need to carry out the host institution staff interviews soon to keep me on track. I have been reading about carrying out Skype interviews and there is quite a lot written about them for research purposes – all quite positive so I will go ahead but am nervous in case the technology fails. However, I and other colleagues use Skype quite frequently with overseas partners, so it should work".
21st January 2018

"*Carried out my first host institution staff interview today. It went really well. The technology did not fail, and the sound quality was good, so I could record. Have listened to the recording and it is fine. It was a really good interview with lots of interesting information. (….) was really open about things and the conversation flowed. I am now very optimistic about the other host institution staff interviews".*
6th February 2018

Appendix 8 A code book linking back to the transcript extracts for a host institution staff member

Code No. linking to text:	**Codes:**
1.	More emphasis on MQA ratings than rankings in Malaysia
2.	Parents and students more aware of ratings in Malaysia
3.	Sending institution has long established reputation over many years and is known about
4.	Parents know about our branding
5.	(*Sending institution*) awareness not high in Malaysia
6.	Parents don't come to host institution knowing about sending institution itself
7.	Education focussed on middle class in Malaysia
8.	Importance of education by Indian and Chinese families in Malaysia
9.	Historically great pride if you were educated, especially overseas
10.	Cultural perception of pride
11.	Family pride
12.	Politics of education in Malaysia
13.	Affordability better now
14.	Families have less children
15.	Education still a limited resource
16.	Family does drive it in Malaysia
17.	Students want foreign degree from well-established countries like Britain and Australia
18.	Influence of British education system as colony and now commonwealth
19.	Prestige of Western degree
20.	Confidence of lecturer in marking
21.	Over marking between campuses
22.	Lecturers say not our fault, somebody else fault
23.	Easy excuse to give to students
24.	Student perception I got this mark and sending institution changed it
25.	**Arguments with parents – not interested in QA process, just want student to pass – pride**
26.	Boils down to family pride and prestige being important
27.	Have had some pretty bad PT lecturers in past, but now just 3 PT lecturers
28.	Resource planning issue at host institution
29.	Sometimes just need to get someone in to teach
30.	Lecturers come and go regularly
31.	Not easy finding right fit for PT lecturers
32.	Student identity – why we split the School
33.	Long uphill struggle to rebrand
34.	Long process to sell sending institution
35.	**Competitor students at host institution really proud of their programme, not so sending institution**
36.	Students from middle class so have experienced migration of family and friends overseas
37.	In the past, grass greener elsewhere so left

38. No not easy getting jobs, racial tensions abroad
39. Choose foreign degree because gives extra choice to study/work
40. Want global education, passport to leave but no need. 10 years ago would have left
41. **Still a feeling if superiority**
42. **Asian culture of keeping quiet, just accept it**
43. **Talk behind your backs**
44. **Need a real partnership**
45. **Lack of understanding by host institution**
46. **Lack openness, open eyes to hear both sides**
47. **People who can see different ways of doing things in a joint process**
48. **Cultural/language sensitivities e.g. Beauty and the Beast!!**
49. **Feel academic integrity being attacked**
50. **Will just agree but feeling of tension**
51. **No respect**

NB: Bold signifies spontaneous expressions

Appendix 9 Phase 3 – An example host institution grouping of codes into initial theme of cultural awareness

Cultural awareness

A Students
16 Misunderstanding more a problem with staff than students
21 Cultural mind-set of students, don't ask but keep quiet

B Problems
41 Still a feeling of superiority
45 Lack of understanding by sending institution
46 Lack of openness/open eyes to see both sides
48 Cultural/language sensitivities e.g. Beauty and the Beast
49 Feel academic integrity being attacked
51 No respect

C Solutions
41 You are here only a few days, so you need to do a lot more probing
44 Need a real partnership

D Culture of Asians
11 Education highly regarded by Malaysians
20 Highly regard our UK colleagues
40 We have good practices, but culture means we keep quiet
42 Asian culture of just keeping quiet, just accept it.
43 Talk behind your backs
50 Will just agree but feeling of tension

NB. Numbers are code identifiers to the transcript text

Appendix 10 Initial thematic map from first year focus groups

Over-arching themes: Culture				
Themes and Sub-themes:				
Importance of studying on a Western franchise degree	**Choice of host and sending institution**	**Learning and teaching**	**Student identity**	**Miscellaneous**
Chance to study abroad eventually e.g. exchange or semester abroad programmes	Already studying at host institution	Curriculum	Limited links with sending institution	Not heard about the terms TNE or cross-border education
Affordable	Small classes	Wide choice of programmes	Feel mostly like a host institution student	Expectations mainly met
Value for money	Location in Malaysia	Positive and negative issues working with overseas students	Limited importance of sending institution tee shirts, etc	
Western badge and certificate	Strong influence of family, friends and school	Support of lecturers	Limited knowledge how sending institution gets involved in the programme	
Global outlook	Reputation and image of host institution; Limited knowledge and ranking of sending institution	Part time lecturers can be poor teachers and not always available		
International programme	Facilities	Good to have Western lecturers		
Career opportunities outside Malaysia	Western	Aware of Malaysian and Western styles of teaching		
But want to come back to Malaysia	Friendly environment	Aware of skills needed to succeed for degree and careers		
	Support of lecturers	Limited or no use of sending institution VLE		

Appendix 11 Initial thematic map from the host staff interviews

Over-arching themes: Culture									
Themes and Sub-themes:									
Western franchise degree	**Choice of host and sending institution**	**Global Awareness**	**Brand/ Image**	**Family**	**Learning and teaching**	**Employability**	**Cultural issues**	**Identity**	**Miscellaneous**
PG opportunities	Repeat customers	Global outlook	Long established reputation of host	Drives education decisions	Turnover of lecturers	High employability	Students tend to keep quiet	Pride of competitor programmes	3 semesters
Not a passport for jobs now	Value	Overseas experience	Host ratings known more	Do research on education	Sometimes urgency of filling roles	Internships	Feeling of sending institution superiority	Rebranded a floor	Meeting deadlines from sending institution
Prestige	Price sensitivity	Passport to leave	College well respected by employers	Importance of education	Some PT lecturers poor	Employer engagement	Cultural sensitivities not understood by sending institution	Tee shirts etc sometimes arrive late	No recognition of college staff
Quality		Global education important		Family pride and prestige	Not easy to find good lecturers	Value to employers	Lack of openness	ID and VLE issues	No collaboration between Module leaders
Good if go abroad		Parents often want children to study and work abroad		Importance of word of mouth	Support mechanisms for PT lecturers	Employers look at partner institutions as well	Integrity undermined		Politics of education in Malaysia

Western franchise degree	Choice of host and sending institution	Global Awareness	Brand/ Image	Family	Learning and teaching	Employability	Cultural issues	Identity	Miscellaneous
Gives extra choices				Parents want children to pass/less concerned with quality	Feedback not on time		No real partnership		Education still limited resource
				Parents want to know about results	Impact of late release of marks		No respect		Historical migration o/s
					Better information on moderation to students		Keep quiet and accept and agree		Historical pride of education abroad
							Keep quiet as high regard for sending institution colleagues		
							Need to do a lot more probing		